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WILL HIS EYES OPEN?

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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JULY, 1863.

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*Romola.*

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CHAPTER LXII.

THE BENEDICTION.



ABOUT ten o'clock on the morning of the twenty-seventh of February the currents of passengers along the Florentine streets set decidedly towards San Marco. It was the last morning of the Carnival, and every one knew there was a second Bonfire of Vanities being prepared in front of the Old Palace; but at this hour it was evident that the centre of popular interest lay elsewhere.

The Piazza di San Marco was filled by a multitude who showed no other movement than that which proceeded from the pressure of new comers trying to force their way forward from all the openings; but the front ranks were already close-serried and resisted the pressure.

Those ranks were ranged around a semicircular barrier in front of the church, and within this barrier were already assembling the Dominican Brethren of San Marco.

But the temporary wooden pulpit erected over the church door was still empty. It was presently to be entered by the man whom the Pope's

command had banished from the pulpit of the Duomo, whom the other ecclesiastics of Florence had been forbidden to consort with, whom the citizens had been forbidden to hear on pain of excommunication. This man had said, "A wicked, unbelieving Pope who has gained the pontifical chair by bribery is not Christ's Vicar. His curses are broken swords: he grasps a hilt without a blade. His commands are contrary to the Christian life: it is lawful to disobey them—nay, *it is not lawful to obey them.*" And the people still flocked to hear him as he preached in his own church of San Marco, though the Pope was hanging terrible threats over Florence if it did not renounce the pestilential schismatic and send him to Rome to be "converted"—still, as on this very morning, accepted the communion from his excommunicated hands. For how if this Frate had really more command over the Divine lightnings than that official successor of Saint Peter? It was a momentous question, which for the mass of citizens could never be decided by the Frate's ultimate test, namely, what was and what was not accordant with the highest spiritual law. No: in such a case as this, if God had chosen the Frate as his prophet to rebuke the High Priest who carried the mystic raiment unworthily, he would attest his choice by some unmistakable sign. As long as the belief in the Prophet carried no threat of outward calamity, but rather the confident hope of exceptional safety, no sign was needed: his preaching was a music to which the people felt themselves marching along the way they wished to go; but now that belief meant an immediate blow to their commerce, the shaking of their position among the Italian States, and an interdict on their city, there inevitably came the question, "What miracle showest thou?" Slowly at first, then faster and faster, that fatal demand had been swelling in Savonarola's ear, provoking a response, outwardly in the declaration that at the fitting time the miracle would come; inwardly in the faith—not unwavering, for what faith is so?—that if the need for miracle became urgent, the work he had before him was too great for the Divine power to leave it halting. His faith wavered, but not his speech: it is the lot of every man who has to speak for the satisfaction of the crowd, that he must often speak in virtue of yesterday's faith, hoping it will come back to-morrow.

It was in preparation for a scene which was really a response to the popular impatience for some supernatural guarantee of the Prophet's mission that the wooden pulpit had been erected above the church door. But while the ordinary Frate in black mantles were entering and arranging themselves, the faces of the multitude were not yet eagerly directed towards the pulpit: it was felt that Savonarola would not appear just yet, and there was some interest in singling out the various monks, some of them belonging to high Florentine families, many of them having fathers, brothers, or cousins among the artisans and shopkeepers who made the majority of the crowd. It was not till the tale of monks was complete, not till they had fluttered their books and had begun to chant, that people said to each other, "Fra Girolamo must be coming now."



That expectation rather than any spell from the accustomed wail of psalmody was what made silence and expectation seem to spread like a paling solemn light over the multitude of upturned faces, all now directed towards the empty pulpit.

The next instant the pulpit was no longer empty. A figure covered from head to foot in black cowl and mantle had entered it, and was kneeling with bent head and with face turned away. It seemed a weary time to the eager people while the black figure knelt and the monks chanted. But the stillness was not broken, for the Frate's audiences with Heaven were yet charged with electric awe for that mixed multitude, so that those who had already the will to stone him felt their arms unnerved.

At last there was a vibration among the multitude, each seeming to give his neighbour a momentary aspen-like touch, as when men who have been watching for something in the heavens see the expected presence silently disclosing itself. The Frate had risen, turned towards the people, and partly pushed back his cowl. The monotonous wail of psalmody had ceased, and to those who stood near the pulpit, it was as if the sounds which had just been filling their ears had suddenly merged themselves in the force of Savonarola's flashing glance, as he looked round him in the silence. Then he stretched out his hands, which, in their exquisite delicacy, seemed transfigured from an animal organ for grasping into vehicles of sensibility too acute to need any gross contact: hands that came like an appealing speech from that part of his soul which was masked by his strong passionate face, written on now with deeper lines about the mouth and brow than are made by forty-four years of ordinary life.

At the first stretching out of the hands some of the crowd in the front ranks fell on their knees, and here and there a devout disciple farther off; but the great majority stood firm, some resisting the impulse to kneel before this excommunicated man (might not a great judgment fall upon him even in this act of blessing?)—others jarred with scorn and hatred of the ambitious deceiver who was getting up this new comedy, before which, nevertheless, they felt themselves impotent, as before the triumph of a fashion.

But then came the voice, clear and low at first, uttering the words of absolution—"Misereatur vestri"—and more fell on their knees; and as it rose higher and yet clearer, the erect heads became fewer and fewer, till, at the words "*Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus*," it rose to a masculine cry, as if protesting its power to bless under the clutch of a demon that wanted to stifle it: it rang like a trumpet to the extremities of the Piazza, and under it every head was bowed.

After the utterance of that blessing Savonarola himself fell on his knees and hid his face in temporary exhaustion. Those great jets of emotion were a necessary part of his life: he himself had said to the people long ago, "Without preaching I cannot live." But it was a life that shattered him.

In a few minutes more, some had risen to their feet, but a larger number remained kneeling, and all faces were intently watching him. He had taken into his hands a crystal vessel, containing the consecrated Host, and was about to address the people.

"You remember, my children, three days ago I besought you, when I should hold this Sacrament in my hand in the face of you all, to pray fervently to the Most High that if this work of mine does not come from Him, He will send a fire and consume me, that I may vanish into the eternal darkness away from His light which I have hidden with my falsity. Again I beseech you to make that prayer, and to make it *now*."

It was a breathless moment: perhaps no man really prayed, if some in a spirit of devout obedience made the effort to pray. Every consciousness was chiefly possessed by the sense that Savonarola was praying, in a voice not loud but distinctly audible in the wide stillness.

"Lord, if I have not wrought in sincerity of soul, if my word cometh not from Thee, strike me in this moment with Thy thunder, and let the fires of Thy wrath enclose me."

He ceased to speak, and stood motionless, with the consecrated Mystery in his hand, with eyes uplifted and a quivering excitement in his whole aspect. Every one else was motionless and silent too, while the sunlight, which for the last quarter of an hour had here and there been piercing the greyness, made fitful streaks across the convent wall, causing some awe-stricken spectators to start timidly. But soon there was a wider parting, and with a gentle quickness, like a smile, a stream of brightness poured itself on the crystal vase, and then spread itself over Savonarola's face with mild glorification.

An instantaneous shout rang through the Piazza, "Behold the answer!"

The warm radiance thrilled through Savonarola's frame, and so did the shout. It was his last moment of untroubled triumph, and in its rapturous confidence he felt carried to a grander scene yet to come, before an audience that would represent all Christendom, whose presence he would again be scaled as the messenger of the supreme righteousness, and feel himself full charged with Divine strength. It was but a moment that expanded itself in that prevision. While the shout was still ringing in his ears he turned away within the church, feeling the strain too great for him to bear it longer.

But when the Frate had disappeared, and the sunlight seemed no longer to have anything special in its illumination, but was spreading itself impartially over all things clean and unclean, there began, along with the general movement of the crowd, a confusion of voices in which certain strong discords and varying scales of laughter made it evident that, in the previous silence and universal kneeling, hostility and scorn had only submitted unwillingly to a momentary spell.

"It seems to me the plaudits are giving way to criticism," said Tito, who had been watching the scene attentively from an upper loggia in one of the houses opposite the church. "Nevertheless it was a striking mo-

ment, eh, Messer Pietro? Fra Girolamo is a man to make one understand that there was a time when the monk's frock was a symbol of power over men's minds rather than over the keys of women's cupboards."

"Assuredly," said Pietro Cennini. "And until I have seen proof that Fra Girolamo has much less faith in God's judgments than the common run of men, instead of having considerably more, I shall not believe that he would brave heaven in this way if his soul were laden with a conscious lie."

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## CHAPTER LXIII.

### RIPENING SCHEMES.

A MONTH after that Carnival, one morning near the end of March, Tito descended the marble steps of the Old Palace, bound on a pregnant errand to San Marco. For some reason, he did not choose to take the direct road, which was but a slightly bent line from the Old Palace; he chose rather to make a circuit by the Piazza di Santa Croce, where the people would be pouring out of the church after the early sermon.

It was in the grand church of Santa Croce that the daily Lenten sermon had of late had the largest audience. For Savonarola's voice had ceased to be heard even in his own church of San Marco, a hostile Signoria having imposed silence on him in obedience to a new letter from the Pope, threatening the city with an immediate interdict if this "wretched worm" and "monstrous idol" were not forbidden to preach, and sent to demand pardon at Rome. And next to hearing Fra Girolamo himself, the most exciting Lenten occupation was to hear him argued against and vilified. This excitement was to be had in Santa Croce, where the Franciscan appointed to preach the Quaresimal sermons had offered to clench his arguments by walking through the fire with Fra Girolamo. Had not that schismatical Dominican said, that his prophetic doctrine would be proved by a miracle at the fitting time? Here, then, was the fitting time. Let Savonarola walk through the fire, and if he came out unhurt, the Divine origin of his doctrine would be demonstrated; but if the fire consumed him, his falsity would be manifest; and that he might have no excuse for evading the test, the Franciscan declared himself willing to be a victim to this high logic, and to be burned for the sake of securing the necessary minor premiss.

Savonarola, according to his habit, had taken no notice of these pulpit attacks. But it happened that the zealous preacher of Santa Croce was no other than the Fra Francesco di Puglia, who at Prato the year before had been engaged in a like challenge with Savonarola's fervent follower Fra Domenico, but had been called home by his superiors while the heat was simply oratorical. Honest Fra Domenico, then, who was preaching Lenten sermons to the women in the Via Coccornero, no sooner heard of

this new challenge, than he took up the gauntlet for his master and declared himself ready to walk through the fire with Fra Francesco. Already the people were beginning to take a strong interest in what seemed to them a short and easy method of argument (for those who were to be convinced), when Savonarola, keenly alive to the dangers that lay in the mere discussion of the case, commanded Fra Domenico to withdraw his acceptance of the challenge and secede from the affair. The Franciscan declared himself content: he had not directed his challenge to any subaltern, but to Fra Girolamo himself.

After that, the popular interest in the Lenten sermons had flagged a little. But this morning, when Tito entered the Piazza di Santa Croce, he found, as he expected, that the people were pouring from the church in large numbers. Instead of dispersing, many of them concentrated themselves towards a particular spot near the entrance of the Franciscan monastery, and Tito took the same direction, threading the crowd with a careless and leisurely air, but keeping careful watch on that monastic entrance, as if he expected some object of interest to issue from it.

It was no such expectation that occupied the crowd. The object they were caring about was already visible to them in the shape of a large placard, affixed by order of the Signoria, and covered with very legible official handwriting. But curiosity was somewhat balked by the fact that the manuscript was chiefly in Latin; and though nearly every man knew beforehand approximately what the placard contained, he had an appetite for more exact knowledge, which gave him an irritating sense of his neighbour's ignorance in not being able to interpret the learned tongue. For that aural acquaintance with Latin phrases which the unlearned might pick up from pulpit quotations constantly interpreted by the preacher could help them little when they saw written Latin; the spelling even of the modern language being in an unorganized and scrambling condition for the mass of people who could read and write,\* and the majority of those assembled nearest to the placard were not in the dangerous predicament of possessing that little knowledge.

"It's the Frate's doctrines that he's to prove by being burned," said that large public character Goro, who happened to be among the foremost gazers. "The Signoria has taken it in hand, and the writing is to let us know. It's what the Padre has been telling us about in his sermon."

"Nay, Goro," said a sleek shopkeeper, compassionately, "thou hast got thy legs into twisted hose there. The Frate has to prove his doctrines by not being burned: he is to walk through the fire, and come out on the other side sound and whole."

"Yes, yes," said a young sculptor, who wore his white-streaked cap and tunic with a jaunty air. "But Fra Girolamo objects to walking

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\* The old diarists throw in their consonants with a scrupulous regard rather to quantity than position, well typified by the *Ragnolo Braghiello* (Agnolo Gabriello) of Boccaccio's *Ferondo*.

through the fire. Being sound and whole already, he sees no reason why he should walk through the fire to come out in just the same condition. He leaves such odds and ends of work to Fra Domenico."

"Then I say he flinches like a coward," said Goro, in a wheezy treble. "Suffocation! that was what he did at the Carnival. He had us all in the Piazza to see the lightning strike him, and nothing came of it."

"Stop that bleating," said a tall shoemaker, who had stepped in to hear part of the sermon, with bunches of slippers hanging over his shoulders. "It seems to me, friend, that you are about as wise as a calf with water on its brain. The Frate will flinch from nothing: he'll say nothing beforehand, perhaps, but when the moment comes he'll walk through the fire without asking any grey-frock to keep him company. But I would give a shoestring to know what this Latin all is."

"There's so much of it," said the shopkeeper, "else I'm pretty good at guessing. Is there no scholar to be seen?" he added, with a slight expression of disgust.

There was a general turning of heads, which caused the talkers to desist Tito approaching in their rear.

"Here is one," said the young sculptor, smiling and raising his cap.

"It is the secretary of the Ten: he is going to the convent, doubtless; make way for him," said the shopkeeper, also doffing, though that mark of respect was rarely shown by Florentines except to the highest officials. The exceptional reverence was really exacted by the splendour and grace of Tito's appearance, which made his black mantle, with its gold fibula, look like a royal robe, and his ordinary black velvet cap like an entirely exceptional head-dress. The hardening of his cheeks and mouth, which was the chief change in his face since he came to Florence, seemed to a superficial glance only to give his beauty a more masculine character. He raised his own cap immediately and said,

"Thanks, my friend, I merely wished, as you did, to see what is at the foot of this placard—ah, it is as I expected. I had been informed that the government permits any one who will to subscribe his name as a candidate to enter the fire—which is an act of liberality worthy of the magnificent Signoria—reserving of course the right to make a selection. And doubtless many believers will be eager to subscribe their names. For what is it to enter the fire, to one whose faith is firm? A man is afraid of the fire, because he believes it will burn him; but if he believes the contrary?"—here Tito lifted his shoulders and made an oratorical pause—"for which reason I have never been one to disbelieve the Frate, when he has said that he would enter the fire to prove his doctrine. For in his place, if you believed the fire would not burn you, which of you, my friends, would not enter it as readily as you would walk along the dry bed of the Mugnone?"

As Tito looked round him during this appeal, there was a change in some of his audience very much like the change in an eager dog when he is invited to smell something pungent. Since the question of burning

was becoming practical, it was not every one who would rashly commit himself to any general view of the relation between faith and fire. The scene might have been too much for a gravity less under command than Tito's.

"Then, Messer Segretario," said the young sculptor, "it seems to me Fra Francesco is the greater hero, for he offers to enter the fire for the truth, though he is sure the fire will burn him."

"I do not deny it," said Tito, blandly. "But if it turns out that Fra Francesco is mistaken, he will have been burned for the wrong side, and the Church has never reckoned such as martyrs. We must suspend our judgment until the trial has really taken place."

"It is true, Messer Segretario," said the shopkeeper, with subdued impatience. "But will you favour us by interpreting the Latin?"

"Assuredly," said Tito. "It does but express the conclusions or doctrines which the Frate specially teaches, and which the trial by fire is to prove true or false. They are doubtless familiar to you. First, that Florence——"

"Let us have the Latin bit by bit, and then tell us what it means," said the shoemaker, who had been a frequent hearer of Fra Girolamo.

"Willingly," said Tito, smiling. "You will then judge if I give you the right meaning."

"Yes, yes; that's fair," said Goro.

"*Ecclesia Dei indiget renovatione*, that is, the Church of God needs purifying or regenerating."

"It is true," said several voices at once.

"That means, the priests ought to lead better lives; there needs no miracle to prove that. That's what the Frate has always been saying," said the shoemaker.

"*Flagellabitur*," Tito went on. "That is, it will be scourged. *Renovabitur*: it will be purified. *Florentia quoque post flagella renovabitur et prosperabitur*: Florence also, after the scourging, shall be purified and shall prosper."

"That means, we are to get Pisa again," said the shopkeeper.

"And get the wool from England as we used to do, I should hope," said an elderly man, in an old fashioned berretta, who had been silent till now. "There's been scourging enough with the sinking of the trade."

At this moment, a tall personage, surmounted by a red feather, issued from the door of the convent, and exchanged an indifferent glance with Tito; who, tossing his *becchetto* carelessly over his left shoulder, turned to his reading again, while the bystanders, with more timidity than respect, shrank to make a passage for Messer Dolfo Spini.

"*Infideles convertentur ad Christum*," Tito went on. "That is, the infidels shall be converted to Christ."

"Those are the Turks and the Moors. Well, I've nothing to say against that," said the shopkeeper, dispassionately.

"*Hæc autem omnia erunt temporibus nostris*—and all these things shall happen in our times."

"Why, what use would they be, else?" said Goro.

"*Excommunicatio nuper lata contra Reverendum Patrem nostrum Fratrem Hieronymum nulla est*—the excommunication lately pronounced against our reverend father, Fra Girolamo, is null. *Non observantes eam non peccant*—those who disregard it are not committing a sin."

"I shall know better what to say to that when we have had the Trial by Fire," said the shopkeeper.

"Which doubtless will clear up everything," said Tito. "That is all the Latin—all the conclusions that are to be proved true or false by the trial. The rest you can perceive is simply a proclamation of the Signoria in good Tuscan, calling on such as are eager to walk through the fire, to come to the Palazzo and subscribe their names. Can I serve you further? If not——"

Tito, as he turned away, raised his cap and bent slightly, with so easy an air that the movement seemed a natural prompting of deference.

He quickened his pace as he left the Piazza, and after two or three turnings he paused in a quiet street before a door at which he gave a light and peculiar knock. It was opened by a young woman whom he chuckled under the chin as he asked her if the Padrone was within, and he then passed, without further ceremony, through another door which stood ajar on his right hand. It admitted him into a handsome but untidy room, where Dolfo Spini sat playing with a fine stag-hound which alternately snuffed at a basket of pups and licked his hands with that affectionate disregard of her master's morals which in the fifteenth century was felt to be one of the most agreeable attributes of her sex. He just looked up as Tito entered, but continued his play, simply from that disposition to persistence in some irrelevant action, by which slow-witted sensual people seem to be continually counteracting their own purposes. Tito was patient.

"A handsome *bracca* that," he said quietly, standing with his thumbs in his belt. Presently he added, in that cool liquid tone which seemed mild, but compelled attention, "When you have finished such caresses as cannot possibly be deferred, my Dolfo, we will talk of business, if you please. My time, which I could wish to be eternity at your service, is not entirely my own this morning."

"Down, Mischief, down!" said Spini, with sudden roughness. "Malediction!" he added, still more gruffly, pushing the dog aside; then, starting from his seat, he stood close to Tito, and put a hand on his shoulder as he spoke.

"I hope your sharp wits see all the ins and outs of this business, my fine necromancer, for it seems to me no clearer than the bottom of a sack."

"What is your difficulty, my cavaliere?"

"These accursed Frati Minori at Santa Croce. They are drawing

back now. Fra Francesco himself seems afraid of sticking to his challenge ; talks of the Prophet being likely to use magic to get up a false miracle—thinks he might be dragged into the fire and burned, and the Prophet might come out whole by magic, and the Church be none the better. And then, after all our talking, there's not so much as a blessed lay brother who will offer himself to pair with that pious sheep Fra Domenico."

"It is the peculiar stupidity of the tonsured skull that prevents them from seeing of how little consequence it is whether they are burned or not," said Tito. "Have you sworn well to them that they shall be in no danger of entering the fire?"

"No," said Spini, looking puzzled; "because one of them will be obliged to go in with Fra Domenico, who thinks it a thousand years till the faggots are ready."

"Not at all. Fra Domenico himself is not likely to go in. I have told you before, my Dolfo, only your powerful mind is not to be impressed with-out more repetition than suffices for the vulgar—I have told you that now you have got the Signoria to take up this affair and prevent it from being hushed up by Fra Girolamo, nothing is necessary but that on a given day the fuel should be prepared in the Piazza, and the people got together with the expectation of seeing something prodigious. If, after that, the Prophet quits the Piazza without any appearance of a miracle on his side, he is ruined with the people: they will be ready to pelt him out of the city, the Signoria will find it easy to banish him from the territory, and his Holiness may do as he likes with him. Therefore, my Alcibiades, swear to the Franciscans that their grey frocks shall not come within singeing distance of the fire."

Spini rubbed the back of his head with one hand, and tapped his sword against his leg with the other, to stimulate his power of seeing these intangible combinations.

"But," he said presently, looking up again, "unless we fall on him in the Piazza, when the people are in a rage, and make an end of him and his lies then and there, Valori and the Salviati and the Albizzi will take up arms and raise a fight for him. I know that was talked of when there was the hubbub on Ascension Sunday. And the people may turn round again: there may be a story raised of the French king coming again, or some other cursed chance in the hypocrite's favour. The city will never be safe till he's out of it."

"He *will* be out of it before long, without your giving yourself any further trouble than this little comedy of the Trial by Fire. The wine and the sun will make vinegar without any shouting to help them, as your Florentine sages would say. You will have the satisfaction of delivering your city from an incubus by an able stratagem, instead of risking blunders with sword-thrusts."

"But suppose he *did* get magic and the devil to help him, and walk through the fire after all?" said Spini, with a grimace intended to hide



a certain shyness in trenching on this speculative ground. "How do you know there's nothing in those things? Plenty of scholars believe in them, and this Frate is bad enough for anything."

"Oh, of course there are such things," said Tito, with a shrug; "but I have particular reasons for knowing that the Frate is not on such terms with the devil as can give him any confidence in this affair. The only magic he relies on is his own ability."

"Ability!" said Spini. "Do you call it ability to be setting Florence at loggerheads with the Pope and all the powers of Italy—all to keep beckoning at the French king who never comes? You may call him able, but I call him a hypocrite, who wants to be master of everybody, and get himself made Pope."

"You judge with your usual penetration, my captain, but our opinions do not clash. The Frate, wanting to be master, and to carry out his projects against the Pope, requires the lever of a foreign power, and requires Florence as a fulcrum. I used to think him a narrow-minded bigot, but now I think him a shrewd ambitious man who knows what he is aiming at, and directs his aim as skilfully as you direct a ball when you are playing at *maglio*."

"Yes, yes," said Spini, cordially, "I can aim a ball."

"It is true," said Tito, with bland gravity; "and I should not have troubled you with my trivial remark on the Frate's ability, but that you may see how this will heighten the credit of your success against him at Rome and at Milan, which is sure to serve you in good stead when the city comes to change its policy."

"Well, thou art a good little demon, and shalt have good pay," said Spini, patronizingly; whereupon he thought it only natural that the useful Greek adventurer should smile with gratification as he said,—

"Of course, any advantage to me depends entirely on your——"

"We shall have our supper at my palace to-night," interrupted Spini, with a significant nod and an affectionate pat on Tito's shoulder, "and I shall expound the new scheme to them all."

"Pardon, my magnificent patron," said Tito; "the scheme has been the same from the first—it has never varied except in your memory. Are you sure you have fast hold of it now?"

Spini rehearsed.

"One thing more," he said, as Tito was hastening away. "There is that sharp-nosed notary, Ser Cecone; he has been handy of late. Tell me, you who can see a man wink when you're behind him, do you think I may go on making use of him?"

Tito dared not say "no." He knew his companion too well to trust him with advice when all Spini's vanity and self-interest were not engaged in concealing the adviser.

"Doubtless," he answered, promptly. "I have nothing to say against Cecone."

That suggestion of the notary's intimate access to Spini caused Tito a

passing twinge, interrupting his amused satisfaction in the success with which he made a tool of the man who fancied himself a patron. For he had been rather afraid of Ser Ceccone. Tito's nature made him peculiarly alive to circumstances that might be turned to his disadvantage; his memory was much haunted by such possibilities, stimulating him to contrivances by which he might ward them off. And it was not likely that he should forget that October morning more than a year ago, when Romola had appeared suddenly before him at the door of Nello's shop, and had compelled him to declare his certainty that Fra Girolamo was not going outside the gates. The fact that Ser Ceccone had been a witness of that scene, together with Tito's perception that for some reason or other he was an object of dislike to the notary, had received a new importance from the recent turn of events. For after having been implicated in the Medicean plots, and found it advisable in consequence to retire into the country for some time, Ser Ceccone had of late, since his reappearance in the city, attached himself to the Arrabbiati, and cultivated the patronage of Dolfo Spini. Now that captain of the Compagnacci was much given, when in the company of intimates, to confidential narrative about his own doings, and if Ser Ceccone's powers of combination were sharpened by enmity, he might gather some knowledge which he could use against Tito with very unpleasant results.

It would be pitiable to be balked in well-conducted schemes by an insignificant notary; to be lamed by the sting of an insect whom he had offended unawares. "But," Tito said to himself, "the man's dislike to me can be nothing deeper than the ill-humour of a dinnerless dog; I shall conquer it if I can make him prosperous." And he had been very glad of an opportunity which had presented itself of providing the notary with a temporary post as an extra *cancelliere* or registering secretary under the Ten, believing that with this sop and the expectation of more, the waspish cur must be quite cured of the disposition to bite him.

But perfect scheming demands omniscience, and the notary's envy had been stimulated into hatred by causes of which Tito knew nothing. That evening when Tito, returning from his critical audience with the Special Council, had brushed by Ser Ceccone on the stairs, the notary, who had only just returned from Pistoja, and learned the arrest of the conspirators, was bound on an errand which bore a humble resemblance to Tito's. He also, without giving up a show of popular zeal, had been putting in the Medicean lottery. He also had been privy to the unexecuted plot, and was willing to tell what he knew, but knew much less to tell. He also would have been willing to go on treacherous errands, but a more eligible agent had forestalled him. His propositions were received coldly; the council, he was told, was already in possession of the needed information, and since he had been thus busy in sedition, it would be well for him to retire out of the way of mischief, otherwise the government might be obliged to take note of him. Ser Ceccone wanted no evidence to make him attribute his failure to Tito, and his spite was the more

bitter because the nature of the case compelled him to hold his peace about it. Nor was this the whole of his grudge against the flourishing Melema. On issuing from his hiding-place, and attaching himself to the Arrabbiati, he had earned some pay as one of the spies who reported information on Florentine affairs to the Milanese court; but his pay had been small, notwithstanding his pains to write full letters, and he had lately been apprised that his news was seldom more than a late and imperfect edition of what was known already. Now Ser Ceccone had no positive knowledge that Tito had an underhand connection with the Arrabbiati and the Court of Milan, but he had a suspicion of which he chewed the cud with as strong a sense of flavour as if it had been a certainty.

This fine-grown vigorous hatred could swallow the feeble opiate of Tito's favours, and be as lively as ever after it. Why should Ser Ceccone like Melema any the better for doing him favours? Doubtless the suave secretary had his own ends to serve; and what right had he to the superior position which made it possible for him to show favour? But since he had tuned his voice to flattery, Ser Ceccone would pitch his in the same key, and it remained to be seen who would win at the game of outwitting.

To have a mind well oiled with that sort of argument which prevents any claim from grasping it, seems eminently convenient sometimes; only the oil becomes objectionable when we find it anointing other minds on which we want to establish a hold.

Tito, however, not being quite omniscient, felt now no more than a passing twinge of uneasiness at the suggestion of Ser Ceccone's power to hurt him. It was only for a little while that he cared greatly about keeping clear of suspicions and hostility. He was now playing his final game in Florence, and the skill he was conscious of applying gave him a pleasure in it even apart from the expected winnings. The errand on which he was bent to San Marco was a stroke in which he felt so much confidence that he had already given notice to the Ten of his desire to resign his office at an indefinite period within the next month or two, and had obtained permission to make that resignation suddenly, if his affairs needed it, with the understanding that Niccolò Macchiavelli was to be his provisional substitute, if not his successor. He was acting on hypothetical grounds, but this was the sort of action that had the keenest interest for his diplomatic mind. From a combination of general knowledge concerning Savonarola's purposes with diligently observed details he had framed a conjecture which he was about to verify by this visit to San Marco. If he proved to be right, his game would be won, and he might soon turn his back on Florence. He looked eagerly towards that consummation, for many circumstances besides his own weariness of the place told him that it was time for him to be gone.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

## THE PROPHET IN HIS CELL.

TITO's visit to San Marco had been announced beforehand, and he was at once conducted by Fra Niccolò, Savonarola's secretary, up the spiral staircase into the long corridors lined with cells—corridors where Fra Angelico's frescoes, delicate as the rainbow on the melting cloud, startled the unaccustomed eye here and there, as if they had been sudden reflections cast from an ethereal world, where the Madonna sat crowned in her radiant glory, and the divine infant looked forth with perpetual promise.

It was an hour of relaxation in the monastery, and most of the cells were empty. The light through the narrow windows looked in on nothing but bare walls, and the hard pallet, and the crucifix. And even behind that door at the end of a long corridor, in the inner cell opening from an ante-chamber where the Prior usually sat at his desk or received private visitors, the high jet of light fell on only one more object that looked quite as common a monastic sight as the bare walls and hard pallet. It was but the back of a figure in the long white Dominican tunic and scapulary, kneeling with bowed head before a crucifix. It might have been any ordinary Fra Girolamo, who had nothing worse to confess than thinking of wrong things when he was singing *in coro*, or feeling a spiteful joy when Fra Benedetto dropped the ink over his own miniatures in the breviary he was illuminating—who had no higher thought than that of climbing safely into paradise up the narrow ladder of prayer, fasting, and obedience. But under this particular white tunic there was a heart beating with a consciousness inconceivable to the average monk, and perhaps hard to be conceived by any man who has not arrived at self-knowledge through a tumultuous inner life: a consciousness in which irrevocable errors and lapses from veracity were so entwined with noble purposes and sincere beliefs, in which self-justifying expediency was so inwoven with the tissue of a great work which the whole being seemed as unable to abandon as the body was unable to abandon glowing and trembling before the objects of hope and fear, that it was perhaps impossible, whatever course might be adopted, for the conscience to find perfect repose.

Savonarola was not only in the attitude of prayer, there were Latin words of prayer on his lips, and yet he was not praying. He had entered his cell, had fallen on his knees, and burst into words of supplication, seeking in this way for an influx of calmness which would be a warrant to him that the resolutions urged on him by crowding thoughts and passions were not wresting him away from the Divine support; but the previsions and impulses which had been at work within him for the last hour were too imperious; and while he pressed his hands against his face, and while his lips were uttering audibly, "*Cor mundum crea in me,*" his

mind was still filled with the images of the snare his enemies had prepared for him, was still busy with the arguments by which he could justify himself against their taunts and accusations.

And it was not only against his opponents that Savonarola had to defend himself. This morning he had had new proof that his friends and followers were as much inclined to urge on the trial by fire as his enemies; desiring and tacitly expecting that he himself would at last accept the challenge and evoke the long-expected miracle which was to dissipate doubt and triumph over malignity. Had he not said that God would declare Himself at the fitting time? And to the understanding of plain Florentines, eager to get party questions settled, it seemed that no time could be more fitting than this. Certainly, if Fra Domenico walked through the fire unhurt, *that* would be a miracle, and the faith and ardour of that good brother were felt to be a cheering augury; but Savonarola was acutely conscious that the secret longing of his followers to see him accept the challenge had not been dissipated by any reasons he had given for his refusal.

Yet it was impossible to him to satisfy them; and with bitter distress he saw now that it was impossible for him any longer to resist the prosecution of the trial in Fra Domenico's case. Not that Savonarola had uttered and written a falsity when he declared his belief in a future supernatural attestation of his work; but his mind was so constituted that while it was easy for him to believe in a miracle which, being distant and undefined, was screened behind the strong reasons he saw for its occurrence, and yet easier for him to have a belief in inward miracles such as his own prophetic inspiration and divinely wrought intuitions; it was at the same time insurmountably difficult to him to believe in the probability of a miracle which, like this of being carried unhurt through the fire, pressed in all its details on his imagination and involved a demand not only for belief but for exceptional action.

Savonarola's nature was one of those in which opposing tendencies co-exist in almost equal strength: the passionate sensibility which, impatient of definite thought, floods every idea with emotion and tends towards contemplative ecstasy, alternated in him with a keen perception of outward facts and a vigorous practical judgment of men and things. And in this case of the Trial by Fire, the latter characteristics were stimulated into unusual activity by an acute physical sensitiveness which gives overpowering force to the conception of pain and destruction as a necessary sequence of facts which have already been experienced as causes of pain. The readiness with which men will consent to touch red-hot iron with a wet finger is not to be measured by their theoretic acceptance of the impossibility that the iron will burn them: practical belief depends on what is most strongly represented in the mind at a given moment. And with the Frate's constitution, when the Trial by Fire was urged on his imagination as an immediate demand, it was impossible for him to believe that he or any other man could walk through the flames unhurt—impos-

sible for him to believe that even if he resolved to offer himself, he would not shrink at the last moment.

But the Florentines were not likely to make these fine distinctions. To the common run of mankind it has always seemed a proof of mental vigour to find moral questions easy, and judge conduct according to concise alternatives. And nothing was likely to seem plainer than that a man who at one time declared that God would not leave him without the guarantee of a miracle, and yet drew back when it was proposed to test his declaration, had said what he did not believe. Were not Fra Domenico and Fra Mariano, and scores of Piagnoni besides, ready to enter the fire? What was the cause of their superior courage, if it was not their superior faith? Savonarola could not have explained his conduct satisfactorily to his friends, even if he had been able to explain it thoroughly to himself. And he was not. Our naked feelings make haste to clothe themselves in propositions which lie at hand among our store of opinions, and to give a true account of what passes within us something else is necessary besides sincerity, even when sincerity is unmixed. In these very moments, when Savonarola was kneeling in audible prayer, he had ceased to hear the words on his lips. They were drowned by argumentative voices within him that shaped their reasons more and more for an outward audience.

"To appeal to heaven for a miracle by a rash acceptance of a challenge, which is a mere snare prepared for me by ignoble foes, would be a tempting of God, and the appeal would not be responded to. Let the Pope's legate come, let the ambassadors of all the great Powers come and promise that the calling of a General Council and the reform of the Church shall hang on the miracle, and I will enter the flames, trusting that God will not withhold His seal from that great work. Until then I reserve myself for higher duties which are directly laid upon me: it is not permitted to me to leap from the chariot for the sake of wrestling with every loud vaunter. But Fra Domenico's invincible zeal to enter into the trial may be the sign of a Divine vocation, may be a pledge that the miracle——"

But no! when Savonarola brought his mind close to the threatened scene in the Piazza, and imagined a human body entering the fire, his belief recoiled again. It was not an event that his imagination could simply see: he felt it with shuddering vibrations to the extremities of his sensitive fingers. The miracle could not be. Nay, the trial itself was not to happen: he was warranted in doing all in his power to hinder it. The fuel might be got ready in the Piazza, the people might be assembled, the preparatory formalities might be gone through: all this was perhaps inevitable now, and he could no longer resist it without bringing dishonour on—himself? Yes, and therefore on the cause of God. But it was not really intended that the Franciscan should enter the fire, and while he hung back there would be the means of preventing Fra Domenico's entrance. At the very worst, if Fra Domenico were com-

pelled to enter, he should carry the consecrated Host with him, and with that Mystery in his hand, there might be a warrant for expecting that the ordinary effects of fire would be stayed ; or, more probably, this demand would be resisted, and might thus be a final obstacle to the trial.

But these intentions could not be avowed : he must appear frankly to await the trial, and to trust in its issue. That dissidence between inward reality and outward seeming was not the Christian simplicity after which he had striven through years of his youth and prime, and which he had preached as a chief fruit of the Divine life. In the stress and heat of the day, with cheeks burning, with shouts ringing in the ears, who is so blest as to remember the yearnings he had in the cool and silent morning, and know that he has not belied them ?

" O God, it is for the sake of the people—because they are blind—because their faith depends on me. If I put on sackcloth and cast myself among the ashes, who will take up the standard and head the battle ? Have I not been led by a way which I knew not to the work that lies before me ? "

The conflict was one that could not end, and in the effort at prayerful pleading the uneasy mind laved its smart continually in thoughts of the greatness of that task which there was no man else to fulfil if he forsook it. It was not a thing of every day that a man should be inspired with the vision and the daring that made a sacred rebel.

Even the words of prayer had died away. He continued to kneel, but his mind was filled with the images of results to be felt through all Europe ; and the sense of immediate difficulties was being lost in the glow of that vision, when the knocking at the door announced the expected visit.

Savonarola drew on his mantle before he left his cell, as was his custom when he received visitors ; and with that immediate response to any appeal from without which belongs to a power-loving nature accustomed to make its power felt by speech, he met Tito with a glance as self-possessed and strong as if he had risen from resolution instead of conflict.

Tito did not kneel, but simply made a greeting of profound deference, which Savonarola received quietly without any sacerdotal words, and then desiring him to be seated, said at once,

" Your business is something of weight, my son, that could not be conveyed through others ? "

" Assuredly, father, else I should not have presumed to ask it. I will not trespass on your time by any proem. I gathered from a remark of Messer Domenico Mazzinghi that you might be glad to make use of the next special courier who is sent to France with despatches from the Pap. I must intreat you to pardon me if I have been too officious ; but inasmuch as Messer Domenico is at this moment away at his villa, I wished to apprise you that a courier carrying important letters is about to depart for Lyons at daybreak to-morrow.

The muscles of Fra Girolamo's face were eminently under command, as must be the case with all men whose personality is powerful, and in

deliberate speech he was habitually cautious, confiding his intentions to none without necessity. But under any strong mental stimulus, his eyes were liable to a dilation and added brilliancy that no strength of will could control. He looked steadily at Tito, and did not answer immediately, as if he had to consider whether the information he had just heard met any purpose of his.

Tito, whose glance never seemed observant, but rarely let anything escape it, had expected precisely that dilation and flash of Savonarola's eyes which he had noted on other occasions. He saw it, and then immediately busied himself in adjusting his gold fibula, which had got wrong; seeming to imply that he awaited an answer patiently.

The fact was that Savonarola had expected to receive this intimation from Domenico Mazzinghi, one of the Ten, an ardent disciple of his whom he had already employed to write a private letter to the Florentine ambassador in France, to prepare the way for a letter to the French king himself in Savonarola's handwriting, which now lay ready in the desk at his side. It was a letter calling on the king to assist in summoning a General Council, that might reform the abuses of the Church, and begin by deposing Pope Alexander, who was not rightfully Pope, being a vicious unbeliever, elected by corruption, and governing by simony.

This fact was not what Tito knew, but what his hypothetic talent, constructing from subtle indications, had led him to guess and hope.

"It is true, my son," said Savonarola, quietly. "It is true I have letters which I would gladly send by safe conveyance under cover to our ambassador. Our community of San Marco, as you know, has affairs in France, being, amongst other things, responsible for a debt to that singularly wise and experienced Frenchman, Signor Philippe de Comines, on the library of the Medici, which we purchased; but I apprehend that Domenico Mazzinghi himself may return to the city before evening, and I should gain more time for preparation of the letters if I waited to deposit them in his hands."

"Assuredly, reverend father, that might be better on all grounds except one, namely, that if anything occurred to hinder Messer Domenico's return, the despatch of the letters would require either that I should come to San Marco again at a late hour, or that you should send them to me by your secretary; and I am aware that you wish to guard against the false inferences which might be drawn from a too frequent communication between yourself and any officer of the government." In throwing out this difficulty Tito felt that the more unwillingness the Frate showed to trust him, the more certain he would be of his conjecture.

Savonarola was silent; but while he kept his mouth firm, a slight glow rose in his face with the suppressed excitement that was growing within him. It would be a critical moment—that in which he delivered the letter out of his own hands.

"It is most probable that Messer Domenico will return in time," said Tito, affecting to consider the Frate's determination settled, and rising from



his chair as he spoke. "With your permission, I will take my leave, father, not to trespass on your time when my errand is done; but as I may not be favoured with another interview, I venture to confide to you what is not yet known to others except to the magnificent Ten, that I contemplate resigning my secretaryship, and leaving Florence shortly. Am I presuming too much on your interest in stating what relates chiefly to myself?"

"Speak on, my son," said the Frate; "I desire to know your prospects."

"I find, then, that I have mistaken my real vocation in forsaking the career of pure letters, for which I was brought up. The politics of Florence, father, are worthy to occupy the greatest mind—to occupy yours—when a man is in a position to execute his own ideas; but when, like me, he can only hope to be the mere instrument of changing schemes, he requires to be animated by the minor attachments of a born Florentine: also, my wife's unhappy alienation from a Florentine residence since the painful events of August naturally influences me. I wish to join her."

Savonarola inclined his head approvingly.

"I intend, then, soon to leave Florence, to visit the chief courts of Europe, and to widen my acquaintance with the men of letters in the various universities. I shall go first to the court of Hungary, where scholars are eminently welcome; and I shall probably start in a week or ten days. I have not concealed from you, father, that I am no religious enthusiast; I have not my wife's ardour; but religious enthusiasm, as I conceive, is not necessary in order to appreciate the grandeur and justice of your views concerning the government of nations and the Church. And if you condescend to intrust me with any commission that will further the relations you wish to establish, I shall feel honoured. May I now take my leave?"

"Stay, my son. When you depart from Florence I will send a letter to your wife, of whose spiritual welfare I would fain be assured, for she left me in anger. As for the letters to France, such as I have ready——"

Savonarola rose and turned to his desk as he spoke. He took from it a letter on which Tito could see, but not read, an address in the Frate's own minute and exquisite handwriting, still to be seen covering the margins of his Bibles. He took a large sheet of paper, enclosed the letter, and sealed it.

"Pardon me, father," said Tito, before Savonarola had time to speak, "unless it were your decided wish, I would rather not incur the responsibility of carrying away the letter. Messer Domenico Mazzinghi will doubtless return, or, if not, Fra Niccolò can convey it to me at the second hour of the evening, when I shall place the other despatches in the courier's hands."

"At present, my son," said the Frate, waiving that point, "I wish you to address this packet to our ambassador in your own handwriting, which is preferable to my secretary's."

Tito sat down to write the address while the Frate stood by him with folded arms, the glow mounting in his cheek, and his lip at last quivering. Tito rose and was about to move away, when Savonarola said abruptly,

"Take it, my son. There is no use in waiting. It does not please me that Fra Niccolò should have needless errands to the Palazzo."

As Tito took the letter, Savonarola stood in suppressed excitement that forbade further speech. There seems to be a subtle emanation from passionate natures like his, making their mental states tell immediately on others; when they are absent-minded and inwardly excited there is silence in the air.

Tito made a deep reverence and went out with the letter under his mantle.

The letter was duly delivered to the courier and carried out of Florence. But before that happened another messenger, privately employed by Tito, had conveyed information in cipher, which was carried by a series of relays to armed agents of Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, on the watch for the very purpose of intercepting despatches on the borders of the Milanese territory.

## CHAPTER LXV.

### THE TRIAL BY FIRE.

LITTLE more than a week after, on the seventh of April, the great Piazza della Signoria presented a stranger spectacle even than the famous Bonfire of Vanities. And a greater multitude had assembled to see it than had ever before tried to find place for themselves in the wide Piazza, even on the day of San Giovanni.

It was near mid-day, and, since the early morning there had been a gradual swarming of the people at every coign of vantage or disadvantage offered by the façades and roofs of the houses, and such spaces of the pavement as were free to the public. Men were seated on iron rods that made a sharp angle with the rising wall, were clutching slim pillars with arms and legs, were astride on the necks of the rough statuary that here and there surmounted the entrances of the grander houses, were finding a palm's breadth of seat on a bit of architrave, and a footing on the rough projections of the rustic stone-work, while they clutched the strong iron rings or staples driven into the walls beside them.

For they were come to see a Miracle: cramped limbs and abraded flesh seemed slight inconveniences with that prospect close at hand. It is the ordinary lot of mankind to hear of miracles, and more or less believe in them; but now the Florentines were going to see one. At the very least they would see half a miracle; for if the monk did not come whole out of the fire, they would see him enter it, and infer that he was burned in the middle.

There could be no reasonable doubt, it seemed, that the fire would be kindled, and that the monks would enter it. For there, before their eyes, was the long platform, eight feet broad, and twenty yards long, with a grove of fuel heaped up terribly, great branches of dry oak as a foundation, crackling thorns above, and well-anointed tow and rags, known to make fine flames in Florentine illuminations. The platform began at the corner of the marble terrace in front of the old palace, close to Marzocco, the stone lion, whose aged visage looked frowningly along the grove of fuel that stretched obliquely across the Piazza.

Besides that, there were three large bodies of armed men: five hundred hired soldiers of the Signoria stationed before the palace, five hundred Compagnacci under Dolfo Spini, far off on the opposite side of the Piazza, and three hundred armed citizens of another sort, under Marco Salviati, Savonarola's friend, in front of Orcagna's Loggia, where the Franciscans and Dominicans were to be placed with their champions.

Here had been much expense of money and labour, and high dignities were concerned. There could be no reasonable doubt that something great was about to happen; and it would certainly be a great thing if the two monks were simply burned, for in that case too God would have spoken, and said very plainly that Fra Girolamo was not his prophet.

And there was not much longer to wait, for it was now near mid-day. Half the monks were already at their post, and that half of the Loggia that lies towards the Palace was already filled with grey mantles; but the other half, divided off by boards, was still empty of everything except a small altar. The Franciscans had entered and taken their places in silence. But now, at the other side of the Piazza was heard loud chanting from two hundred voices, and there was general satisfaction, if not in the chanting, at least in the evidence that the Dominicans were come. That loud chanting repetition of the prayer, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered," was unpleasantly suggestive to some impartial ears of a desire to vaunt confidence and excite dismay; and so was the flame-coloured velvet cope in which Fra Domenico was arrayed as he headed the procession, cross in hand, his simple mind really exalted with faith, and with the genuine intention to enter the flames for the glory of God and Fra Girolamo. Behind him came Savonarola in the white vestment of a priest, carrying in his hands a vessel containing the consecrated Host. He too was chanting loudly, he too looked firm and confident, and as all eyes were turned eagerly on him either in anxiety, curiosity or malignity, from the moment when he entered the Piazza till he mounted the steps of the Loggia and deposited the Sacrament on the altar, there was an intensifying flash and energy in his countenance responding to that scrutiny.

We are so made, almost all of us, that the false seeming which we have thought of with painful shrinking when beforehand in our solitude it has urged itself on us as a necessity, will possess our muscles and move our lips as if nothing but that were easy when once we have come under

the stimulus of expectant eyes and ears. And the strength of that stimulus to Savonarola can hardly be measured by the experience of ordinary lives. Perhaps no man has ever had a mighty influence over his fellows without having the innate need to dominate, and this need usually becomes the more imperious in proportion as the complications of life make self inseparable from a purpose which is not selfish. In this way it came to pass that on the day of the Trial by Fire, the doubleness which is the pressing temptation in every public career, whether of priest, orator, or statesman, was more strongly defined in Savonarola's consciousness as the acting of a part, than at any other period in his life. He was struggling not against impending martyrdom, but against impending ruin.

Therefore he looked and acted as if he were thoroughly confident, when all the while foreboding was pressing with leaden weight on his heart, not only because of the probable issues of this trial, but because of another event already past—an event which was spreading a sunny satisfaction through the mind of a man who was looking down at the passion-worn prophet from a window of the Old Palace. It was a common turning-point towards which those widely sundered lives had been converging, that two evenings ago the news had come that the Florentine courier of the Ten had been arrested and robbed of all his despatches, so that Savonarola's letter was already in the hands of the Duke of Milan, and would soon be in the hands of the Pope, not only heightening rage but giving a new justification to extreme measures. There was no malignity in Tito Melema's satisfaction: it was the mild self-gratulation of a man who has won a game that has employed hypothetic skill, not a game that has stirred the muscles and heated the blood. Of course that bundle of desires and contrivances called human nature, when moulded into the form of a plain-featured Frate Predicatore, more or less of an impostor, could not be a pathetic object to a brilliant-minded scholar who understood everything. Yet this censured Girolamo with the high nose and large under lip was an immensely clever Frate, mixing with his absurd superstitions or fabrications very remarkable notions about government: no babbler, but a man who could keep his secrets. Tito had no more spite against him than against Saint Dominic. On the contrary, Fra Girolamo's existence had been highly convenient to Tito Melema, furnishing him with that round of the ladder from which he was about to leap on to a new and smooth footing very much to his heart's content. And everything now was in forward preparation for that leap: let one more sun rise and set, and Tito hoped to quit Florence. He had been so industrious that he felt at full leisure to amuse himself with to-day's comedy, which the thick-headed Dolfo Spini could never have brought about but for him.

Not yet did the loud chanting cease, but rather swelled to a deafening roar, being taken up in all parts of the Piazza by the Piagnoni, who carried their little red crosses as a badge and, most of them, chanted the prayer for the confusion of God's enemies with the expectation of an answer to be given through the medium of a more signal personage than

Fra Domenico. This good Frate in his flame-coloured cope was now kneeling before the little altar on which the Sacrament was deposited, awaiting his summons.

On the Franciscan side of the Loggia there was no chanting and no flame-colour: only silence and greyness. But there was this counter-balancing difference, that the Franciscans had two champions: a certain Fra Giuliano was to pair with Fra Domenico, while the original champion, Fra Francesco, confined his challenge to Savonarola.

"Surely," thought the men perched uneasily on rods and pillars, "all must be ready now. This chanting might stop, and we should see better when the Frati are moving towards the platform."

But the Frati were not to be seen moving yet. Pale Franciscan faces were looking uneasily over the boarding at that flame-coloured cope. It had an evil look and might be enchanted, so that a false miracle would be wrought by magic. Your monk may come whole out of the fire, and yet it may be the work of the devil.

And now there was passing to and fro between the Loggia and the marble terrace of the Palazzo, and the roar of chanting became a little quieter, for every one at a distance was beginning to watch more eagerly. But it soon appeared that the new movement was not a beginning, but an obstacle to beginning. The dignified Florentines appointed to preside over this affair as moderators on each side, went in and out of the Palace, and there was much debate with the Franciscans. But at last it was clear that Fra Domenico, conspicuous in his flame-colour, was being fetched towards the Palace. Probably the fire had already been kindled—it was difficult to see at a distance—and the miracle was going to begin.

Not at all. The flame-coloured cope disappeared within the Palace; then another Dominican was fetched away; and for a long while every thing went on as before—the tiresome chanting, which was not miraculous, and Fra Girolamo in his white vestment standing just in the same place. But at last something happened: Fra Domenico was seen coming out of the Palace again, and returning to his brethren. He had changed all his clothes with a brother monk, but he was guarded on each flank by a Franciscan, lest coming into the vicinity of Savonarola he should be enchanted again.

"Ah, then," thought the distant spectators, a little less conscious of cramped limbs and hunger, "Fra Domenico is not going to enter the fire. It is Fra Girolamo who offers himself after all. We shall see him move presently, and if he comes out of the flames we shall have a fine view of him!"

But Fra Girolamo did not move, except with the ordinary action accompanying speech. The speech was bold and firm, perhaps somewhat ironically remonstrant, like that of Elijah to the priests of Baal, demanding the cessation of these trivial delays. But speech is the most irritating kind of argument for those who are out of hearing, cramped in the limbs, and empty in the stomach. And what need was there for speech? If

the miracle did not begin, it could be no one's fault but Fra Girolamo's, who might put an end to all difficulties by offering himself now the fire was ready, as he had been forward enough to do when there was no fuel in sight.

More movement to and fro, more discussion; and the afternoon seemed to be slipping away all the faster because the clouds had gathered, and changed the light on everything, and sent a chill through the spectators, hungry in mind and body.

Now it was the crucifix which Fra Domenico wanted to carry into the fire and must not be allowed to profane in that manner. After some little resistance Savonarola gave way to this objection, and thus had the advantage of making one more concession; but he immediately placed in Fra Domenico's hands the vessel containing the consecrated Host. The idea that the presence of the sacred mystery might in the worst extremity avert the ordinary effects of fire hovered in his mind as a possibility; but the issue on which he counted was of a more positive kind. In taking up the Host he said quietly, as if he were only doing what had been presupposed from the first,

"Since they are not willing that you should enter with the crucifix, my brother, enter simply with the Sacrament."

New horror in the Franciscans; new firmness in Savonarola. "It was impious presumption to carry the Sacrament into the fire: if it were burned the scandal would be great in the minds of the weak and ignorant." "Not at all: even if it were burned, the Accidents only would be consumed, the Substance would remain." Here was a question that might be argued till set of sun and remain as elastic as ever; and no one could propose settling it by proceeding to the trial, since it was essentially a preliminary question. It was only necessary that both sides should remain firm—that the Franciscans should persist in not permitting the Host to be carried into the fire, and that Fra Domenico should persist in refusing to enter without it.

Meanwhile the clouds were getting darker, the air chiller. Even the chanting was missed now it had given way to inaudible argument; and the confused sounds of talk from all points of the Piazza, showing that expectation was everywhere relaxing, contributed to the irritating presentiment that nothing decisive would be done. Here and there a dropping shout was heard; then, more frequent shouts in a rising scale of scorn.

"Light the fire and drive them in!" "Let us have a smell of roast—we want our dinner!" "Come, Prophet, let us know whether anything is to happen before the twenty-four hours are over!" "Yes, yes, what's your last vision?" "Oh, he's got a dozen in his inside; they're the small change for a miracle!" "Où, Frate, where are you? Never mind wasting the fuel!"

Still the same movement to and fro between the Loggia and the Palace; still the same debate, slow and unintelligible to the multitude as the colloquies of insects that touch antennæ to no other apparent effect

than that of going and coming. But an interpretation was not long wanting to unheard debates in which Fra Girolamo was constantly a speaker: it was he who was hindering the trial; everybody was appealing to him now, and he was hanging back.

Soon the shouts ceased to be distinguishable, and were lost in an uproar not simply of voices, but of clashing metal and trampling feet. The suggestions of the irritated people had stimulated old impulses in Dolto Spini and his band of Compagnacci; it seemed an opportunity not to be lost for putting an end to Florentine difficulties by getting possession of the arch-hypocrite's person; and there was a vigorous rush of the armed men towards the Loggia, thrusting the people aside, or driving them on to the file of soldiery stationed in front of the palace. At this movement, everything was suspended both with monks and embarrassed magistrates except the palpitating watch to see what would come of the struggle.

But the Loggia was well guarded by the band under the brave Salviati; the soldiers of the Signoria assisted in the repulse; and the trampling and rushing were all backward again towards the Tetto de' Pisani, when the blackness of the heavens seemed to intensify in this moment of utter confusion, and the rain, which had already been felt in scattered drops, began to fall with rapidly growing violence, wetting the fuel, and running in streams off the platform, wetting the weary, hungry people to the skin, and driving every man's disgust and rage inwards to ferment there in the damp darkness.

Everybody knew now that the trial by fire was not to happen. The Signoria was doubtless glad of the rain, as an obvious reason, better than any pretext, for declaring that both parties might go home. It was the issue which Savonarola had expected and desired; yet it would be an ill description of what he felt to say that he was glad. As that rain fell, and plashed on the edge of the Loggia, and sent spray over the altar and all garments and faces, the Frate knew that the demand for him or his to enter the fire was at an end. But he knew too, with a certainty as irresistible as the damp chill that had taken possession of his frame, that the design of his enemies was fulfilled, and that his honour was not saved. He knew that he should have to make his way to San Marco again through the enraged crowd, and that the hearts of many friends who would once have defended him with their lives would now be turned against him.

When the rain had ceased he asked for a guard from the Signoria, and it was given him. Had he said that he was willing to die for the work of his life? Yes, and he had not spoken falsely. But to die in dishonour—held up to scorn as a hypocrite and a false prophet? "O God! *that* is not martyrdom! It is the blotting out of a life that has been a protest against wrong. Let me die because of the worth that is in me, not because of my weakness."

The rain had ceased, and the light from the breaking clouds fell on

Savonarola as he left the Loggia in the midst of his guard, walking, as he had come, with the Sacrament in his hand. But there seemed no glory in the light that fell on him now, no smile of heaven: it was only that light which shines on, patiently and impartially, justifying or condemning by simply showing all things in the slow history of their ripening. He heard no blessing, no tones of pity, but only taunts and threats. He knew this was but a foretaste of coming bitterness; yet his courage mounted under all moral attack, and he showed no sign of dismay.

"Well parried, Frate!" said Tito, as Savonarola descended the steps of the Loggia. "But I fear your career at Florence is ended. What say you, my Niccolò?"

"It is a pity his falsehoods were not all of a wise sort," said Macchiavelli, with a melancholy shrug. "With the times so much on his side as they are about church affairs, he might have done something great."

## CHAPTER LXVI.

### A MASQUE OF THE FURIES.

THE next day was Palm Sunday, or Olive Sunday, as it was chiefly called in the olive-growing Valdarno; and the morning sun shone with a more delicious clearness for the yesterday's rain. Once more Savonarola mounted the pulpit in San Marco, and saw a flock around him whose faith in him was still unshaken; and this morning in calm and sad sincerity he declared himself ready to die: in the front of all visions he saw his own doom. Once more he uttered the benediction, and saw the faces of men and women lifted towards him in venerating love. Then he descended the steps of the pulpit and turned away from that sight for ever.

For before the sun had set Florence was in an uproar. The passions which had been roused the day before had been smouldering through that quiet morning, and had now burst out again with a fury not unassisted by design, and not without official connivance. The uproar had begun at the Duomo in an attempt of some Compagnacci to lunder the evening sermon, which the Piagnoni had assembled to hear. But no sooner had men's blood mounted and the disturbances had become an affray than the cry arose, "To San Marco! the fire to San Marco!"

And long before the daylight had died, both the church and convent were being besieged by an enraged and continually increasing multitude. Not without resistance; for the monks, long conscious of growing hostility without, had arms within their walls, and some of them fought as vigorously in their long white tunics as if they had been Knights Templars. Even the command of Savonarola could not prevail against the impulse to self-defence in arms that were still muscular under the Dominican serge. There were laymen too who had not chosen to depart, and some of them fought fiercely: there was firing from the high altar close by the great



crucifix, there was pouncing of stones and hot embers from the convent roof, there was close fighting with swords in the cloisters. Notwithstanding the force of the assailants, the attack lasted till deep night.

The demonstrations of the Government had all been against the convent; early in the attack guards had been sent, not to disperse the assailants, but to command all within the convent to lay down their arms, all laymen to depart from it, and Savonarola himself to quit the Florentine territory within twelve hours. Had Savonarola quitted the convent then, he could hardly have escaped being torn to pieces; he was willing to go, but his friends hindered him. It was felt to be a great risk even for some laymen of high name to depart by the garden wall, but among those who had chosen to do so was Francesco Valori, who hoped to raise rescue from without.

And now when it was deep night—when the struggle could hardly have lasted much longer, and the Compagnacci might soon have carried their swords into the library, where Savonarola was praying with the Brethren who had either not taken up arms or had laid them down at his command—there came a second body of guards, commissioned by the Signoria to demand the persons of Fra Girolamo and his two coadjutors, Fra Domenico and Fra Salvestro.

Loud was the roar of triumphant hate when the light of lanterns showed the Frate issuing from the door of the convent with a guard who promised him no other safety than that of the prison. The struggle now was, who should get first in the stream that rushed up the narrow street to see the Prophet carried back in ignominy to the Piazza where he had braved it yesterday—who should be in the best place for reaching his ear with insult, nay, if possible, for smiting him and kicking him. This was not difficult for some of the armed Compagnacci who were not prevented from mixing themselves with the guards.

When Savonarola felt himself dragged and pushed along in the midst of that hooting multitude; when lanterns were lifted to show him deriding faces; when he felt himself spat upon, smitten and kicked with grossest words of insult, it seemed to him that the worst bitterness of life was past. If men judged him guilty, and were bent on having his blood, it was only death that awaited him. But the worst drop of bitterness can never be wrung on to our lips from without: the lowest depth of resignation is not to be found in martyrdom; it is only to be found when we have covered our heads in silence and felt, "I am not worthy to be a martyr: the truth shall prosper, but not by me."

But that brief imperfect triumph of insulting the Frate, who had soon disappeared under the doorway of the Old Palace, was only like the taste of blood to the tiger. Were there not the houses of the hypocrite's friends to be sacked? Already one half of the armed multitude, too much in the rear to share greatly in the siege of the convent, had been employed in the more profitable work of attacking rich houses, not with planless desire for plunder, but with that discriminating selection of such as

belonged to chief Piagnoni, which showed that the riot was under guidance, and that the rabble with clubs and staves was well officered by sword-girt Compagnacci. Was there not—next criminal after the Frate—the ambitious Francesco Valori, suspected of wanting with the Frate's help to make himself a Doge or Gonfaloniere for life? And the grey-haired man who, eight months ago, had lifted his arm and his voice in such ferocious demand for justice on five of his fellow-citizens, only escaped from San Marco to experience what *others* called justice—to see his house surrounded by an angry, greedy multitude, to see his wife shot dead with an arrow, and to be himself murdered, as he was on his way to answer a summons to the Palazzo, by the swords of men named Ridolfi and Tornabuoni.

In this way that Masque of the Furies, called Riot, was played on in Florence through the hours of night and early morning.

But the chief director was not visible: he had his reasons for issuing his orders from a private retreat, being of rather too high a name to let his red feather be seen waving amongst all the work that was to be done before the dawn. The retreat was the same house and the same room in a quiet street between Santa Croce and San Marco, where we have seen Tito paying a secret visit to Dolfo Spini. Here the captain of the Compagnacci sat through this memorable night, receiving visitors who came and went, and went and came, some of them in the guise of armed Compagnacci, others dressed obscurely and without visible arms. There was abundant wine on the table, with drinking cups for chance comers; and though Spini was on his guard against excessive drinking, he took enough from time to time to heighten the excitement produced by the news that was being brought to him continually.

Among the obscurely dressed visitors Ser Ceccone was one of the most frequent, and as the hours advanced towards the morning twilight he had remained as Spini's constant companion, together with Francesco Cei, who was then in rather careless hiding in Florence, expecting to have his banishment revoked when the Frate's fall had been accomplished.

The tapers had burnt themselves into low shapeless masses, and holes in the shutters were just marked by a sombre outward light, when Spini, who had started from his seat and walked up and down with an angry flush on his face at some talk that had been going forward with those two unmilitary companions, burst out—

"The devil spit him! he shall pay for it, though. Ha, ha! the claws shall be down on him when he little thinks of them. So he was to be the great man after all! He's been pretending to chuck everything towards my cap, as if I were a blind beggarman, and all the while he's been winking and filling his own scarsella. I should like to hang skins about him and set my hounds on him! And he's got that fine ruby of mine, I was fool enough to give him yesterday. Malediction! And he was laughing at me in his sleeve two years ago, and spoiling the best plan that ever was laid. I was a fool for trusting myself with a rascal who had

long-twisted contrivances that nobody could see to the end of but himself."

"A Greek, too, who dropped into Florence with gems packed about him," said Francesco Cei, who had a slight smile of amusement on his face at Spini's fuming. "You did *not* choose your confidant very wisely, my Dolfo."

"He's a cursed deal cleverer than you, Francesco, and handsomer too," said Spini, turning on his associate with a general desire to worry anything that presented itself.

"I humbly conceive," said Ser Ceccone, "that *Meister* Francesco's poetic genius will outweigh——"

"Yes, yes, rub your hands! I hate that notary's trick of yours," interrupted Spini, whose patronage consisted largely in this sort of frankness. "But there comes Taddeo, or somebody: now's the time! What news, eh?" he went on, as two Compagnacci entered with heated looks.

"Bad!" said one. "The people had made up their minds they were going to have the sacking of Soderini's house, and now they've been balked we shall have them turning on us, if we don't take care. I suspect there are some Mediceans buzzing about among them, and we may see them attacking your palace over the bridge before long, unless we can find a bait for them another way."

"I have it," said Spini, and seizing Taddeo by the belt he drew him aside to give him directions, while the other went on telling Cei how the Signoria had interfered about Soderini's house.

"Ecco!" exclaimed Spini, presently, giving Taddeo a slight push towards the door. "Go and make quick work."

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### WAITING BY THE RIVER.

ABOUT the time when the two Compagnacci went on their errand, there was another man who, on the opposite side of the Arno, was also going out into the chill grey twilight. His errand, apparently, could have no relation to theirs; he was making his way to the brink of the river at a spot which, though within the city walls, was overlooked by no dwellings, and which only seemed the more shrouded and lonely for the warehouses and granaries which at some little distance backward turned their shoulders to the river. There was a sloping width of long grass and rushes made all the more dank by broad gutters which here and there emptied themselves into the Arno.

The gutters and the loneliness were the attraction that drew this man to come and sit down among the grass, and bend over the waters that ran swiftly in the channelled slope at his side. For he had once

had a large piece of bread brought to him by one of those friendly runlets, and more than once a raw carrot and apple parings. It was worth while to wait for such chances in a place where there was no one to see, and often in his restless wakefulness he came to watch here before daybreak; it might save him for one day the need of that silent begging which consisted in sitting on a church step or by the wayside out beyond the Porta San Frediano.

For Baldassarre hated begging so much that he would have perhaps chosen to die rather than make even that silent appeal, but for one reason that made him desire to live. It was no longer a hope; it was only that possibility which clings to every idea that has taken complete possession of the mind: the sort of possibility that makes a woman watch on a headland for the ship which held something dear, though all her neighbours are certain that the ship was a wreck long years ago. After he had come out of the convent hospital, where the monks of San Miniato had taken care of him as long as he was helpless; after he had watched in vain for the wife who was to help him, and had begun to think that she was dead of the pestilence that seemed to fill all the space since the night he parted from her, he had been unable to conceive any way in which sacred vengeance could satisfy itself through his arm. His knife was gone, and he was too feeble in body to win another by work, too feeble in mind, even if he had had the knife, to contrive that it should serve its one purpose. He was a shattered, bewildered, lonely old man; yet he desired to live: he waited for something of which he had no distinct vision—something dim, formless—that startled him, and made strong pulsations within him, like that unknown thing which we look for when we start from sleep, though no voice or touch has waked us. Baldassarre desired to live; and therefore he crept out in the grey light and seated himself in the long grass and watched the waters that had a faint promise in them.

Meanwhile the Compagnacci were busy at their work. The formidable bands of armed men, left to do their will, with very little interference from an embarrassed if not conniving Signoria, had parted into two masses, but both were soon making their way by different roads towards the Arno. The smaller mass was making for the Ponte Rubaconte, the larger for the Ponte Vecchio; but in both the same words had passed from mouth to mouth as a signal, and almost every man of the multitude knew that he was going to the Via de' Bardi to sack a house there. If he knew no other reason, could he demand a better?

The armed Compagnacci knew something more, for a brief word of command flies quickly, and the leaders of the two streams of rabble had a perfect understanding that they would meet before a certain house a little towards the eastern end of the Via de' Bardi, where the master would probably be in bed, and be surprised in his morning sleep.

But the master of that house was neither sleeping nor in bed: he had not been in bed that night. For Tito's anxiety to quit Florence had been

stimulated by the events of the previous day : investigations would follow in which appeals might be made to him delaying his departure ; and in all delay he had an uneasy sense that there was danger. Falsehood had prospered and waxed strong ; but it had nourished the twin life, Fear. He no longer wore his armour, he was no longer afraid of Baldassarre ; but from the corpse of that dead fear a spirit had risen—the undying *habit* of fear. He felt he should not be safe till he was out of this fierce, turbid Florence ; and now he was ready to go. Maso was to deliver up his house to the new tenant ; his horses and mules were awaiting him in San Gallo ; Tessa and the children had been lodged for the night in the Borgo outside the gate, and would be dressed in readiness to mount the mules and join him. He descended the stone steps into the court-yard, he passed through the great doorway, not the same Tito, but as brilliant, as on the day when he had first entered that house and made the mistake of falling in love with Romola. The mistake was remedied now, the old life was cast off, and was soon to be far behind him.

He turned with rapid steps towards the Piazza dei Mozzi, intending to pass over the Ponte Rubaconte ; but as he went along certain sounds came upon his ears that made him turn round and walk yet more quickly in the opposite direction. Was the mob coming into Oltrarno ? It was a vexation, for he would have preferred the more private road. He must now go by the Ponte Vecchio ; and unpleasant sensations made him draw his mantle close round him, and walk at his utmost speed. There was no one to see him in that grey twilight. But before he reached the end of the Via de' Bardi like sounds fell on his ear again, and this time they were much louder and nearer. Could he have been deceived before ? The mob must be coming over the Ponte Vecchio. Again he turned, from an impulse of fear that was stronger than reflection ; but it was only to be assured that the mob was actually entering the street from the opposite end. He chose not to go back to his house : after all, they would not attack *him*. Still, he had some valuables about him ; and all things except reason and order are possible with a mob. But necessity does the work of courage. He went on towards the Ponte Vecchio, the rush and the trampling and the confused voices getting so loud before him that he had ceased to hear them behind.

For he had reached the end of the street, and the crowd pouring from the bridge met him at the turning and hemmed in his way. He had not time to wonder at a sudden shout before he felt himself surrounded, not, in the first instance, by an unarmed rabble, but by armed *Compagnacci* ; the next sensation was that his cap fell off, and that he was thrust violently forward amongst the rabble, along the narrow passage of the bridge. Then he distinguished the shouts, "*Piagnone ! Medicean ! Piagnone ! Throw him over the bridge !*"

His mantle was being torn off him with strong pulls that would have throttled him if the fibula had not given way. Then his *scarsella* was snatched at ; but all the while he was being hustled and dragged ; and the

snatch failed—his scarsella still hung at his side. Shouting, yelling, half-motiveless execration rang stunningly in his ears, spreading even amongst those who had not yet seen him, and only knew there was a man to be reviled. Tito's horrible dread was that he should be struck down or trampled on before he reached the open arches that surmount the centre of the bridge. There was one hope for him—that they might throw him over before they had wounded him or beaten the strength out of him; and his whole soul was absorbed in that one hope and its obverse terror.

Yes—they *were* at the arches. In that moment Tito, with bloodless face and eyes dilated, had one of the self-preserving inspirations that come in extremity. With a sudden desperate effort he mastered the clasp of his belt, and flung belt and scarsella forward towards a yard of clear space against the parapet, crying in a ringing voice,—

“There are diamonds! there is gold!”

In the instant the hold on him was relaxed, and there was a rush towards the scarsella. He threw himself on the parapet with a desperate leap, and the next moment plunged—plunged with a great splash into the dark river far below.

It was his chance of salvation; and it was a good chance. His life had been saved once before by his fine swimming, and as he rose to the surface again after his long dive he had a sense of deliverance. He struck out with all the energy of his strong prime, and the current helped him. If he could only swim beyond the Ponte alla Carrara he might land in a remote part of the city, and even yet reach San Gallo. Life was still before him. And the idiot mob, shouting and bellowing on the bridge there, would think he was drowned.

They did think so. Peering over the parapet along the dark stream, they could not see afar off the moving blackness of the floating hair, and the velvet tunic-sleeves.

It was only from the other way that a pale olive face could be seen looking white above the dark water: a face not easy even for the indifferent to forget, with its square forehead, the long low arch of the eyebrows, and the long lustrous agate-like eyes. Onward the face went on the dark current, with inflated quivering nostrils, with the blue veins distended on the temples. One bridge was passed—the bridge of Santa Trinità. Should he risk landing now rather than trust to his strength? No. He heard, or fancied he heard, yells and cries pursuing him. Terror pressed him most from the side of his fellow-men: he was less afraid of indefinite chances, and he swam on, panting and straining. He was not so fresh as he would have been if he had passed the night in sleep.

Yet the next bridge—the last bridge—was passed. He was conscious of it; but in that tumult of his blood, he could only feel vaguely that he was safe and might land. But where? The current was having its way with him: he hardly knew where he was: exhaustion was bringing on the dreamy state that precedes unconsciousness.

But now there were eyes that discerned him—aged eyes, strong for the distance. Baldassarre, looking up blankly from the search in the runlet that brought him nothing; had seen a white object coming along the broader stream. Could that be any fortunate chance for him? He looked and looked till the object gathered form: then he leaned forward with a start as he sat among the rank green stems, and his eyes seemed to be filled with a new light. Yet he only watched—motionless. Something was being brought to him.

'The next instant a man's body was cast violently on the grass two yards from him, and he started forward like a panther, clutching the velvet tunic as he fell forward on the body and flashed a look in the man's face.

Dead—was he dead? The eyes were rigid. But no, it could not be—justice had brought him. Men looked dead sometimes, and yet the life came back into them. Baldassarre did not feel feeble in that moment. He knew just what he could do. He got his large fingers within the neck of the tunic and held them there, kneeling on one knee beside the body and watching the face. There was a fierce hope in his heart, but it was mixed with trembling. In his eyes there was only fierceness: all the slow-burning remnant of life within him seemed to have leaped into flame.

Rigid—rigid still. Those eyes with the half-fallen lids were locked against vengeance. *Could* it be that he was dead? There was nothing to measure the time: it seemed long enough for hope to freeze into despair.

Surely at last the eyelids were quivering: the eyes were no longer rigid. There was a vibrating light in them—they opened wide.

"Ah, yes! You see me—you know me!"

Tito knew him; but he did not know whether it was life or death that had brought him into the presence of his injured father. It might be death—and death might mean this chill gloom with the face of the hideous past hanging over him for ever.

But now Baldassarre's only dread was, lest the young limbs should escape him. He pressed his knuckles against the round throat and knelt upon the chest with all the force of his aged frame. Let death come now!

Again he kept his watch on the face. And when the eyes were rigid again, he dared not trust them. He would never loose his hold till some one came and found them. Justice would send some witness, and then, he, Baldassarre, would declare that he had killed this traitor, to whom he had once been a father. They would perhaps believe him now, and then he would be content with the struggle of justice on earth—then he would desire to die with his hold on this body, and follow the traitor to hell that he might clutch him there.

And so he knelt, and so he pressed his knuckles against the round throat, without trusting to the seeming death, till the light got strong, and

he could kneel no longer. Then he sat on the body, still clutching the neck of the tunic. But the hours went on, and no witness came. No eyes discerned afar off the two human bodies among the tall grass by the river-side. Florence was busy with greater affairs, and the preparation of a deeper tragedy.

Not long after those two bodies were lying in the grass, Savonarola was being tortured and crying out in his agony, "I will confess!"

It was not until the sun was westward that a waggon drawn by a mild grey ox came to the edge of the grassy margin, and as the man who led it was leaning to gather up the round stones that lay heaped in readiness to be carried away, he detected some startling object in the grass. The aged man had fallen forward, and his dead clutch was on the garment of the other. It was not possible to separate them: nay, it was better to put them into the waggon and carry them as they were into the great Piazza, that notice might be given to the Light.

As the waggon entered the frequented streets there was a growing crowd escorting it with its strange burden. No one knew the bodies for a long while, for the aged face had fallen forward, half hiding the younger. But before they had been moved out of sight, they had been recognized.

"I know that old man," Piero di Cosimo had testified. "I painted his likeness once. He is the prisoner who clutched Malema on the steps of the Duomo."

"He is perhaps the same old man who appeared at supper in my gardens," said Bernardo Rucellu, one of the Light. "I had forgotten him—I thought he had died in prison. But there is no knowing the truth now."

Who shall put his finger on the work of justice, and say, "It is there?" Justice is like the kingdom of God—it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning.





## Over-eating and Under-eating.

Most persons are accustomed to think of starvation merely in its acute form, with the accompaniments of a death preceded by horrible suffering; and they can scarcely realize to themselves the less conspicuous but not less fatal influence which in its partial form it exerts as an abettor of disease. Let us try and realize what this influence is, under two or three different sets of circumstances. And first with regard to its mischievous action upon the infant population. We are well accustomed to speak of the period of infancy as a perilous one, and the public is tolerably familiar with the fact that an enormous proportion of the whole mortality occurs in subjects under the age of five years, but people seldom reason out to themselves the cause of this extraordinary and disproportionate fatality of disease in the very young. It does not seem to occur to them that the very diseases which decimate the infant population are just those which always fall with most crushing force on the ill-fed. But ask the physician of any children's hospital what are the maladies which make most havoc with their little patients, and they will tell you, first of all, the epidemic fevers, the inflammatory diseases which are common at certain seasons of the year, intestinal complaints, and next to these, consumption, rickets, scrofula, diseases of the nervous system of a low type. If you have any doubt that starvation plays a large part in the production of such diseases as these, go to the homes of these children, and look at the multiplied appliances of it which meet the eye on every side. The poor, pallid, ill-fed mothers can hardly give a very rich supply of food to their infants during the time of their dependence on them, and then, when the time comes for artificial feeding, all the powers of ignorance come into play as auxiliaries and fosterers of disease. The proper feeding of a new-weaned infant is a most difficult problem, and it is usually solved by those poor mothers by an abrupt transition to the administration of food only suited to the nourishment of adults, and a small part only of which, with infinite distress to the infant, can get assimilated. And did the mothers ever so well understand the principles of infant dietetics, there are terrible hindrances in the way of their carrying them out, in many cases arising from the nature of their avocations. The young growing animal requires above all things that its food should be administered at short intervals, but the occupations of many poor women detain them from their homes for hours together; and in the meanwhile the infants are often intrusted to some ignorant nurse, or elder child.

A little examination of the Registrar-General's tables will show us the unmistakable traces of these evil influences. One of the first things we

notice is that, if we take any year at random, and calculate the proportion between the mortality at all ages, and that during the first year of life, we soon perceive that there is a great and constant difference between different districts of the country in this respect. If we take the three districts—Lancashire, London, and the Eastern registral division—we get the following results:—In the year 1858 we find that in London the mortality at ages under one year was 22·2 per cent. of the total number of deaths; in the Eastern district, 22·6; whilst in Lancashire it was as high as 25 per cent. In the year 1855 the mortality of infants under one year old was—in London, 21 per cent. of the deaths at all ages; in the Eastern district, 22·4 per cent.; in Lancashire, 25 per cent.: while the mortality under the age of one year in the whole of England was, in the year 1858, only 23·5 per cent., and in 1855 only 22·9 per cent. of the deaths at all ages. If we examine the ratio which the deaths occurring between the ages of one and two years bear to the whole mortality during these two years, we shall find equally constant differences in the different districts. Thus, in 1855, the deaths at this age were—in London, 9·09 per cent. of the whole mortality; in Lancashire, 10·22 per cent.; in the Eastern division, only 5·49 per cent; while the average for all England was 7·65 per cent. of the general mortality. In 1858, the deaths between the ages of one and two years were—in London, 10·48 per cent.; in Lancashire, 10·96 per cent.; and in the Eastern division, only 5·68 per cent. of the general mortality: the average proportion for all England being 8·33 per cent.

The above figures, which are fully supported by more extended observations, which we have not space to detail here, bring strongly into relief the following facts:—1. The mortality during the first year of life is very considerably higher, in proportion to the total number of deaths, in Lancashire than either in London or the more sparsely populated Eastern district; between the two latter there is a small difference in favour of London; both of them are decidedly below the average for all England in this respect, and Lancashire is much above it. 2. The mortality during the second year of life is also higher in proportion to the deaths at all ages in Lancashire than either in London or the Eastern district: but in this case London nearly comes up to Lancashire, both being very greatly above the average for all England, while the Eastern district is almost as much below.

Now, seeing that there is such an immunity from danger to life during the first year in London, as compared with Lancashire, while in the second year this difference is almost done away with, and London becomes also extraordinarily fatal, we are driven to look for a special cause for these peculiarities. This cause is evidently constant, and not epidemic: and among constant causes there are none which are reconcileable with the facts already mentioned, except *peculiarity of nutrition*. Upon this hypothesis much that is difficult to understand might be readily explained. Both Lancashire and London are crowded districts, with a large poor popu-

lation; any cause, then, of mortality existing generally among the poor will make itself quickly felt in the general tables for these districts. In Lancashire the occupations of poor women have a great tendency to make them neglect the feeding of their infants, even from the first, and at every subsequent stage. In London, on the contrary, during the first year, the infants, for the most part, receive the food which Nature has provided for them with tolerable regularity; but during the second year all sorts of mischief arise from the operation of two causes—(a) the improper continuance, by many poor women, of nursing, and (b) the employment of unsuitable artificial food, through sheer ignorance or prejudice.

Of course, if defective nutrition be the cause of so much of the fatal sickness that occurs among young children, the poor class will afford the most numerous cases; but it must not be supposed that there are none in the ranks of the wealthier. Ignorance and prejudice are not entirely confined to the indigent; and a large number of better-class children yearly fall victims to the extraordinary perversity and stupidity of nurses and mothers in their ideas of what forms a proper artificial food for a young infant. The commonest of common sense would seem to dictate that no very violent change should be made from the elements of food which were provided in the first place by nature; but this idea receives but small attention; and then, when the little unfortunates have fits it is put down to "the teeth;" or if their limbs become crooked, it is all laid to the blame of some servant who allowed them to walk too soon. That last sentence about crooked limbs reminds us that the disease of which it is a symptom—"rickets"—is a valuable illustration of the inexorable manner in which nature revenges outrages on her own plain indications. M. Guérin, a great authority upon this subject, made experiments upon animals, by which he proved the possibility of inducing artificial "rickets" at will by merely separating the young too early from their mothers, and feeding them with artificial food suited to the adult condition. There can be no doubt that in all these cases of improper infant feeding, partial starvation is induced, both by the imperfect assimilation of the food, and by the diminution of digestive power which is brought about.

The diseases of children caused by imperfect nutrition have received a most interesting and unexpected illustration in the course of the present cotton famine. The ill reputation of Lancashire for infant mortality has been already referred to. It now remains to be noted that, during the recent distress, this mortality has become *most markedly less*, notwithstanding the diminished resources of the parents. The explanation, on the principles already laid down, is simple: the mothers are now unemployed, and have time to attend to the feeding of their children; and they are far more skilful at this task than the incompetent persons to whom it is ordinarily confided, by whom the little creatures are, in plain truth, slowly starved in great numbers, or, at least, so weakened as to be unable to resist slight shocks of disease, particularly of epidemic diseases.

It is during infancy that the results of partial starvation are most fatal, as might be expected. But its influence is obvious enough at later stages of life. Thus, the growing boy or girl not only becomes stunted and ill formed, but special tendencies to disease develop themselves with the development of the body, the nervous system being particularly apt to suffer. In one instance, the brain is ill-developed and intelligence is low, in other cases an unnatural tendency to convulsive diseases is set up, in consequence of the general feebleness of the nervous centres, and the child becomes epileptic or hysterical, or gets St. Vitus' dance—diseases which may be produced by many other causes, but which, among the poor, certainly depend principally on deficient or unwholesome food. Both in youth and in adult life the consequences of such deficiency are Protean in the shapes which they assume, ranging from the decided typhus epidemics, which announce the existence of extreme and wide-spread destitution, through all the shades of bodily disorder consequent on lowered nutrition, till we come to a point at which it has no more distinct and tangible result than the production of rheumatism, according as the deprivation of food is greater or less, and according as it is general or merely restricts the choice of food-materials.

It may be well at the present time, when we are all so much interested by the famine in the cotton districts, to refer to the circumstances, so far as they can now be recalled, of another period of scarcity—the potato-famine, which was felt most severely in 1847–48. In Lancashire, the evil effects of high prices of food were aggravated by the fact that there was a lack of employment during many months, and the consequences were terrible: typhus fever was developed with great severity, and scurvy also appeared. But with the resumption of full work at the mills the public health soon improved. The course of events was otherwise in the agricultural counties. The case of Wiltshire\* is sufficiently interesting to be worth inquiring into. In the whole of this county wages have been, and still are, low, especially in the northern division, so much lower than those of the Lancashire districts that the manner of feeding of the people is radically different in the two counties. As to the absolute quantity of food used in Wiltshire by the poorer class of labourers, I shall have more to say hereafter, at present it is sufficient to say that it can hardly have been much higher, in 1847–48, in a large part of the county, than that now obtainable by the unemployed of Lancashire by means of various sources of relief. The result was a large increase of mortality. The ordinary average for the county being 2.075 per cent. of the whole population, it rose in 1847 to 2.219, in 1848, to 2.236, and in 1849 (year of the cholera), to 2.285, these three years stand out in bad pre-eminence over all others. Yet the true type of famine-typhus was never developed, so far as can be discovered. And in connection with this fact, it is interesting to note that in the cotton districts at the

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\* This county is selected merely as an example of the low-paid agricultural districts.

present time we are told that no considerable outbreak of this dreadful pestilence has occurred, except in Preston: a circumstance which must be traced, we think, to the methodical way in which the unemployed have been fed, as compared with the experience of 1847 in the same county. It is unfortunately impossible to procure sufficient data to construct an accurate table of the diseases produced by the scarcity of 1847-48 in Wiltshire and other districts similarly situated; but we know that among the principal results of a continuously meagre diet, such as a large part of the poor population were subjected to, bowel complaint, scurvy, scrofula, consumption, ulcers, rheumatism, and gout must be reckoned, besides a decidedly increased susceptibility to contagious fevers and acute inflammations. Nor must we forget the significant fact that among the poor of the poorer agricultural districts the proportion of lunacy is always uncommonly high.

So far, we may imagine the mind of an alderman to have dwelt with considerable complacency on our remarks. Under-feeding has been proved to be a most mischievous practice, to be avoided by all sensible people. In truth, however, this homily of ours on the evils of starvation has been introduced as a mere prologue to some serious remarks on the very opposite error into which as many of us as have the means are very apt to run, and for which we have *not* the excuse that "we couldn't help it." One hears very much in these days of the baneful practice of excess in drink; but it may be well to inform our readers that Dr. Fothergill, a physician of large experience, who had seen the worst of the old drinking times of the eighteenth century, expressed his deliberate opinion that even in the days when alcoholic debauches were fashionable, more harm was done by over-eating than by over-drinking. In the present day, at any rate, these words are, we believe, undoubtedly true; although we should hardly now-a-days agree with the notions that formerly prevailed as to the manner in which repletion works its evil effects.

First, as to repletion from mere quantity of food, this being decidedly in excess of what the healthy body requires, we may remark that whatever may be the truth, which is a matter of dispute, as to its producing a continuous and increasing state of plethora, of over-nourishment, with an accompanying tendency to congestion and a disposition to inflammatory disease, there can be no doubt that one of its most important evil results is the "fatigue," to use an expression of Dr. Brinton's, which it inflicts upon the organism. The researches of Bidder and Schmidt have proved that the various secretions which effect the elaboration of food are poured out in enormous quantities, and that so far from being altogether eliminated from the body, the greater part of them is again taken up into the blood. Now the secretion of complex fluids like these is, undoubtedly, a process which demands a large expenditure of vital force, and, in all probability, any unnecessary increase of such a process is highly exhausting to the system. Moreover, the systematic continuance of a diet which calls for such increased exertions rapidly weakens the digestive powers,

and the ultimate result will inevitably be that less rather than more than the necessary amount of food will be concocted and made fit for the nutrition of the body, while the excreting organs will be taxed to the uttermost, and their powers seriously weakened for the important purpose of removing effete or poisonous matters from the body. It is thus possible that the over-fed man may be, in truth, at once starved and poisoned; and it may thus happen that the very diseases (*e. g.* gout) which are often produced by insufficient diet, may be caused by a wasteful supply of food.

In this country, at least, excess in eating means, for the most part, excess in consumption of flesh food; and unfortunately, the very persons who indulge most freely in this way are the least fitted for such habits, for they are generally individuals whose muscular system, from comparative disuse, is feebly developed. The alderman who indulges himself in half a dozen dishes, consisting of various kinds of flesh, and following a basin of rich turtle-soup, is not usually a Hercules as to muscle, or he might suffer less from his imprudence; for it has been established by physiologists that the animal whose muscular system is well-developed can dispose of more flesh food than a weaker animal. One of the most mischievous consequences of such a manner of feeding is the propensity engendered to take large doses of alcohol with the meals; and although some of the more immediate ill consequences of gourmandizing are thus obviated, the results are most unfortunate, for such doses of alcohol exercise an undoubtedly poisonous narcotic influence, not only upon the nervous system at large, but also, locally, upon the stomach, the nervous force of which they materially weaken. And when such liquors as port-wine are used in large quantity, the tendency to such disorders as gout, already sufficiently strong, is materially increased.

On the whole it may be said that absolute repletion, or excessive food-supply, has most certainly a deteriorating influence upon the tissues, and in this way it is possible to account for most of the morbid affections to which the over-fed system is liable. The tendency to fatty and earthy degeneration of muscles and of blood-vessels, and to wearing out, so to speak, of secreting glands, which is produced, is sufficient to explain the diseases of the heart, of the liver, the kidneys, and the brain to which systematic over-eaters are liable.

But besides the 'absolute' repletion which is caused by a food-supply altogether excessive in quantity, scarcely less harm is done to the system by the exhausting efforts which are entailed upon it by irregular eating. The practice, which is so common, of crowding several hearty meals into the space of a few hours, and then leaving the stomach empty during a long period, is very hurtful, and among the wealthy classes may almost be called the source of dyspepsia. And where the same practice is followed by persons whose meals are composed of coarser and less digestible food, as by young servant-girls, serious disease of the stomach is often produced, the evil effects being greatly increased by the haste

and carelessness with which the food is chewed, or, rather, not chewed. But with all persons the question, how much should be eaten at any one particular meal, must be determined not so much by absolute rules as by relative considerations. Much depends on the amount of bodily fatigue which may exist at the moment of eating; for under circumstances of great exhaustion a meal which at other times would be moderate, may prove altogether excessive; and a basin of soup, under such circumstances, may be more nutritious than a dinner of five courses. Yet such is the force of habit, that men who come home exhausted by a day's laborious work at chambers or counting-house constantly sit down to meals which would tax the energy of the most vigorous stomach.

Even supposing, however, that the digestive organs are of such potent vigour that they can dispose of burdens which are far beyond the just limit, and that in one way or another the enormous mass of food does for the most part get absorbed and carried into the blood, it is not to be supposed, as the over-feeder is apt to do, that all difficulties are at an end. Nothing can be more conclusive than the proof obtained by Bischoff and Voit, that the taking of an unnecessarily large quantity of flesh food (the ordinary form of gourmandizing in England) produces a marked increase in the rate of the waste of the tissues, even while it preserves or increases the total bulk of the body; and this process, carried beyond very restricted limits, is undoubtedly most unwholesome, and must come in time to interfere with the proper balance of physiological processes, and, in fact, result in what really amounts to starvation. It is thus that persons who may never in their lives have felt the necessity of checking a large appetite and an overweening love of rich savoury meats, may be laying for themselves the foundation of a real atrophy of organs, the integrity of which is essential to any long continuance of life.

If the reader now, in some alarm at these remarks, proceeds to inquire, "How much, then?" and endeavours to fix us to some exact quantitative rules, we must fairly tell him that he will be disappointed. So many considerations affect the question of the total bulk of daily food necessary, that absolute rules are impossible: nevertheless, it is extremely useful to examine those rough approximative calculations which have been made by various observers, both scientific and practical. Foremost in interest are some well-known experiments of Chossat, which show under what circumstances of feeding life can *not* be supported: any diet, he found, which permitted any one of the higher vertebrate animals to lose so much as two-fifths of its weight invariably proved fatal to its life when that point of wasting was reached. The experiments were repeated by Schuchardt with substantially the same results; and both these observers established the fact that improper feeding produced precisely the same results (though in a longer time) as absolute starvation. If we pass from the consideration of what will cause fatal starvation to the results of a diet only slightly, by comparison, deficient, we find an apt illustration of the results of such a style of feeding in the circumstances of Wiltshire

during the potato famine, and of Lancashire at this present time. In the latter county, we learn from the quarterly report of the Registrar-General that the average income of the unemployed population for a long time past has not exceeded 4*d.* per head per diem, while in a large number of cases it sinks far below this scale. But the prices of provisions are not at famine rate, and in this respect there is a vast difference from the state of things which prevailed in 1847; and, on the whole, the condition of the people may be said to represent a degree of nutrition not very materially below the line of sufficiency.

In Wiltshire there has always been a great difference between different districts as to the amount of wages; but in a large portion of the county they did not exceed 6*s.* a week prior to the potato famine: that was the price of the men's labour, and that source of income would be supplemented by the sums they could earn by piece-work, and at extraordinary times, such as harvesting. Moreover, many of the cottages had gardens attached to them, in which the labourers could grow vegetables, either for their own use or for sale. At present the wages in most places where they were originally 6*s.* have risen to 8*s.* per week; and we believe that, for the most part, this change was effected during the time of the distress of 1847-48: it is fair, therefore, to suppose that men in full work received 8*s.* But, on the other hand, there was a great failure, not only in potatoes, but in other vegetables which at ordinary times might have been grown in the cottagers' gardens. In a large number of cases of families, consisting of man, wife, and three or four young children, 8*s.* a week must have represented the whole income during the very worst times of distress from high prices; as, for instance, a month or two prior to the harvest of 1847, when bread rose to 1*s.* 5*d.* the 8 lbs. Now, if we subtract from the weekly 8*s.*, 1*s.* for rent, another 1*s.* for firing, and another 1*s.* for tea and sugar, there remains 5*s.* for the solid food—necessaries. If we allow the man and wife 8 lbs. of bread each, and three children 4 lbs. each per week, we consume another 3*s.* 6½*d.*, leaving only 1*s.* 5½*d.* How would this small remaining sum be spent?—in vegetables or meat, butter or cheese? It is impossible to give a precise answer to this question, but this much is certain, that many labourers' families lived altogether on bread, and that a large number more lived upon bread chiefly, supplemented with a little rice, of which the coarser kinds were then sold at 2*d.* per pound, and perhaps occasionally a few vegetables. Meat of all kinds disappeared almost totally (even bacon) from use, and butter and cheese were also for the most part given up. To the last, however, tea never appears to have been renounced; the people would rather stint themselves in solid food than do without that luxury, or necessary, as we may please to call it. It is a fact, that not only did these labourers live, in by far the greatest part, on bread, but that (like all poor persons whom we have ever known) they utterly refused to eat anything but the whitest and finest, that is, the least nutritious, kinds: and in this way the evils of the distress must have been most materially aggravated, not only as regards the actual



fatality of disease, but as regards the production of chronic diseases, such as low gout and rheumatism. On the whole, we are justified in saying that the scale of nutrition was certainly fully as low, and probably considerably lower than that prevailing among the unemployed of Lancashire at the present time; or, at least, that this would be true with regard to the northern division of Wiltshire, and this, too, with the men *in work*, and not idle, as the Lancashire operatives are. Somewhere about one pound and a half of bread per diem, together with a little tea, must have constituted the diet of many a working labourer—a diet which he would probably, with an almost pardonable instinct, in many cases supplement by running up a limited score for beer at the public-house.

Now if we turn from this picture, roughly drawn it is true, of an insufficient diet, to the declarations of physiologists as to what is sufficient, we shall find considerable diversity among their opinions. Valentin, who experimented on himself, states that about 6 lbs. per diem of solid and liquid food was the quantity which sufficed to keep him in full health; and Dr. Brinton, who agrees generally with this estimate, considers that 2 lbs. should consist of solid food. Dalton, an American physiologist, considers, from experiments made on himself, that about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of solids and 3 lbs. of liquids per diem is the proper quantity, at least when a diet is used consisting of bread, meat, butter, coffee, and water, as in his investigations. The elaborate researches of Vierordt give a different result, only about 18 ounces of solids being used, together with a much larger quantity of water than in either of the preceding estimates. But as the experiments of Valentin and Dalton were made on themselves, *i. e.* on persons actively exerting their minds (and probably their bodies also), whereas the subject of Vierordt's experiments seems to have been a mere human lay figure, using, probably, the minimum of exertion of any kind, no fair comparison can be made between the results.

So much for attempts roughly to decide the quantity of diet merely by weight. The fact, however, becomes very quickly apparent to any student of dietetics, that an immense deal depends on *quality* also, and numerous direct researches illustrate this principle very forcibly. In the first place, it is found that a monotonous diet, consisting of any one substance only, is very innutritious, a fact which agrees with Bischoff and Voit's observations on dogs. The latter observers found that to support dogs adequately upon a diet consisting of lean meat only, as much of the food must be used daily as would equal 1-20th to 1-25th of the entire weight of the animal. If, however, a certain small proportion of fat were added, the quantity of lean flesh required was reduced to an entirely disproportionate extent, not more than one-half or one-third as much being used. The substance on which, as the sole article of diet, it is easiest for the adult human being to subsist in health, is doubtless bread, but monotony even in the use of this admirable food has been abundantly proved to be very hurtful; and most probably this kind of sameness of diet co-operates powerfully with mere insufficiency of food in producing evil results in

times of scarcity, such as that of the potato famine. In Wiltshire, for instance, wages of labourers are, in many parts, even now, only eight shillings a week; but owing to the comparative cheapness of provisions, and to other circumstances, the people are able constantly to add to their meals butter and cheese, a little small beer, and more occasionally some vegetables, and a little bacon.\* The mortality of the county in 1862, with a population, of course, largely increased since 1847, was 20 per cent. less, in actual numbers, than that of the latter year, and still further below the numbers of 1848; and we may fairly suppose that, for the mere purposes of fitting the men for hard labour in the field, and keeping them in good animal health, their diet is sufficient.

If this indeed be the case, if anything like the diet of the agricultural labourer be enough for the purposes of ordinary existence, what are our wealthy classes doing? Here, however, we must at once make a distinction, separating the men of tranquil, cheerful lives, whose occupations do not expose them to much brain-fatigue or anxiety, from those who are subjected to such influences. It is impossible in the space of this paper to go into the interesting, but very large question of the kinds of diet suitable to various occupations; but we may state the general principle which is now fully recognized, that continuous and severe exertion of the intellect, or excitement of the passions, or even continuous deprivation of the pleasing emotions (such as is experienced by prisoners confined for long terms), absolutely requires an increased and richer food in order to maintain health. A considerable proportion of our wealthy over-feeders lead lives which may be said to be as nearly as possible free from the disturbance of laborious intellectual work, or of wearing emotion, and to these, as far as their own chances of long and comfortable lives are concerned, it might be well, perhaps, to apply such a system of diet as we have described. But we have, by no means, exhausted the difficulties of the problem, unless we could be sure that not only would such a diet be sufficient to carry such men through a long and healthy life, but would also ensure, as far as such a thing can be ensured, that their offspring will be born with healthy organisms, and specially with vigorous nervous systems, which would not be likely to break down under the first strain put upon them. On the whole, perhaps Dalton's estimate of two pounds and a half solid and three pounds of liquid food may be considered as nearly representing the quantities which would be suitable for an adult not living a life of great mental exertion or anxiety, and, like Dalton, not drinking alcohol. In the case of a moderate consumer of alcoholic drinks, this proportion may be somewhat reduced. We agree with Mr. Lewes that it is impossible to doubt that, making all allowance for possible peculiarities of circumstances and constitution, the very small daily quantity of solid food (12 oz.), on which the celebrated Cornaro lived for so many years, was rendered suffi-

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\* The kindness of the masters, doubtless, in many cases, helps the labourers, as for instance when they grind corn into flour for them, gratis.

cient, in great measure, by the 14 oz. of light wine which he added to it; though we would by no means recommend our readers to try the effect of such severe abstinence, even with this mitigation.

If any such standard as that of Valentin or Dalton, as to quantity of food, be adopted, attention must be paid to the proportion of flesh-food which should enter into it. Dalton allowed one pound of meat per diem; and from a comparison of numerous dietaries of public institutions, due allowance being made for the peculiar circumstances of their respective inmates, this seems to approach pretty nearly to the best general average that can be given for the nourishment of adult males. From what has been already stated as to the influence of a high muscular development in the demand for flesh-food, it will be inferred that women, under ordinary circumstances, would require less of this sort of nourishment than men. It is scarcely necessary to add that to the digestive organs of many of both sexes, such a large proportion of meat is found to be unsuited, and that it is necessary to find other means of accomplishing the object which it is supposed to effect, *i. e.* the supply of a large quantity of concentrated nitrogenous food to the system. Here we may revert to the experiments of Bischoff and Voit, already alluded to, in which it was observed that the addition of a certain amount of fat to the flesh-food has an extraordinary influence in diminishing the quantity of the latter which is required. And we may remark that further researches of these physiologists have demonstrated that sugar and starchy matters play, to a great extent, the same part. These observations enable us to understand such phenomena as the diet of the Hindoo, which consists in great part of rice (a highly starchy food), together with a considerable quantity of melted butter (animal fat), and a small proportion only of some cereal grains, containing nitrogen. In the case of the Hindoo, however, this substitution of starchy and fatty for nitrogenous elements of food has been carried to an excess which prevents that development of muscular strength which distinguishes the well-fed Englishman, even when he gets almost no food but bread; but this would be a far less calamity to many of our lazy gourmandizers than is the condition which they bring themselves to by fatiguing their organisms with continual over-doses of flesh-foods.

But, indeed, without travelling out of the range of nitrogenous substances, there are most important substitutes for flesh-food which are practically adopted into use by large sections of the population, and which yet receive but slight attention from the wealthy classes. Cheese and onions are two articles of so extremely plebeian a character that they are apt to be unjustly depreciated; and yet so high is their nutritive value that we have no hesitation in saying that they, more than anything else, stand between the low-paid agricultural labourer of some districts and the kind of chronic starvation which ensues on a diet quantitatively not very much more scanty than that which now keeps him in tolerable health. Both these are highly nitrogenous. With regard to onions, their value is

so well understood in the navy, that in the list of rations they are considered equivalent in nutritive value to four times their weight of any other kind of vegetable except their congeners, the leeks; while with regard to cheese, we may state that in nutritive value it equals or exceeds any single article of diet which it is possible to name. The one objection to cheese is that it is frequently slow of digestion; but this defect may be overcome, as Dr. Brinton well remarks, by "minute division, cooking, or careful mastication," and "by a proper admixture of vegetable food." Whence it follows that the cheese-macaroni, with which many persons carelessly finish an already copious dinner, is by no means a mere alimentary trifle that may be thrown in without due account taken; and that large masses of savoury Portugal onions, however tempting, are not the thing to add to a meal without making serious compensating reductions.

The evils of excess in those forms of vegetable food which are very slightly nitrogenous is trifling compared to excesses in flesh-food, in bread, or in any of the more nitrogenous vegetables. The greatest evil, perhaps, of an excessive consumption of highly starchy vegetables, like potatoes, is, that their mere bulk satisfies the sense of hunger to a greater extent than their starchy materials can compensate for the deficiency of nitrogen and of various important mineral matters. Something of the same kind occurs as a result of the practice of living almost exclusively on the *whitest* sorts of bread, which contain far less nitrogen than the coarser varieties. Whoever could cure the poorer classes of this very serious dietetic error would confer a double benefit on them, in saving them from the results of mechanical repletion, combined with real starvation, of a sort which tends to produce rheumatic and gouty affections. It is a fortunate thing that, as pointed out by Dr. Brinton, the direct evil consequences of an excessive ingestion of starchy matters are very much diminished by their passing through the body undissolved.

It will be observed that we have made no mention of the basis which by many physiologists is considered to afford far the safest ground for any quantitative rules of diet, viz. the calculation of the excreta of the body during long periods of time. It must not be supposed, however, that we are indifferent to this subject, which is likely soon to receive an important development from investigations now in progress in the hands of more than one accomplished physiologist; but, in truth, it would be impossible to do justice to that aspect of the question without introducing, also, considerations as to the influence of particular occupations, &c., which would altogether exceed the space which we can afford. It seemed preferable to point to the results of experiments ready made to our hand by accidental circumstances, by the skill of the physiologist, or by the practical shrewdness of persons who have found themselves under the necessity of dieting large numbers of men, women, and children. From the latter class of experiments we select one, in conclusion, which it seems to us particularly useful to introduce to general notice, viz. the scale of

diets adopted at the infirmary for scrofulous children at Margate, an establishment at which, of course, good nutrition is a *sine quâ non* of success in treatment. We quote from Dr. Brinton.

At this infirmary, it appears that children between the ages of five and ten years receive daily 8 or 10 ounces of bread and half a pint of milk (with water), 3 or 4 ounces of roast or boiled meat,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. potatoes or other vegetables, with a quarter of a pint of porter, on five days of the week, substituted on the remaining two days by from 8 to 12 ounces rice or currant pudding, or occasionally some soup instead. Children between the ages of ten and sixteen receive daily 12 to 14 ounces bread and a pint and a half of tea, 5 or 6 ounces roast or boiled meat, with 1 lb. potatoes or other vegetables, together with half a pint of porter, on five days of the week, substituted on the remaining two days by 16 ounces rice or currant pudding, or soup. This is certainly a liberal diet, and it may be added that it is an extremely successful one; while the only source of waste in it is the "plain" roasting and boiling of the meat: against which venerated national custom it appears useless to struggle at present.

Our observations are intended rather to be suggestive of thought in our readers than to convey exact rules. They are intended to show what an important influence a slight and perfectly avoidable dietetic mistake may have on the health of large classes of people; but they are by no means intended to cast a slight upon the sacred right of private judgment in matters of supply. Every heart, and every stomach also, "knows its own burden," though possibly the remarks we have made may suggest doubts in the minds of some how far this latter sort of knowledge goes. One delusion, at least, we may hope they will serve to dispel, that the greater the bulk of food, especially meat, which can be taken without actual digestive discomfort, the better; while possibly they may suggest a rational explanation of the calming influence which moderate stimulation unquestionably exerts upon the outrageousness of that sort of appetite which clamours unreasonably for mere quantity of food.

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## Stage Adaptations of Shakspeare.

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DURING the palmy days of the drama, as they are called, people went oftener than they do now to see the plays of Shakspeare represented on the stage; but they studied them less in the closet. Hence veneration for the name of the poet was not necessarily accompanied by an accurate knowledge of his poetry; and while that name appeared in the bills the audience felt satisfied that they heard the genuine strains of the Swan of Avon, whereas, in many cases, they were presented with parodies of the Shakspearian creations, rather than with the creations themselves. The form in which several of Shakspeare's plays appeared, not more than thirty years ago, was the result of corruptions and partial restorations, the history of which extends over something like a century and a half. Within the last thirty years, on the other hand, a respect for the text of the poet has sprung up, which was totally unknown to the past generation, with the exception of the literary few; and managers have therefore vied with each other in banishing the interpolations and supplying the omissions of a former age. Save in the case of one popular play, Shakspeare's text has been taken as the basis of stage representation, without regard to his adaptors; the introduction of new matter into the text has been strictly prohibited, and where excisions have been made, it has been not with the intention of "improving" Shakspeare, but in deference to two qualities which distinguish our age from his—namely, an increased sensitiveness to indelicacies of language, and a less commendable dread of the tedious. Those managers who have carried to the extreme the theory that Shakspeare is most highly honoured when his works are made a vehicle for pageantry show a respect for his words which would have astounded a Garrick, or even a John Kemble. Opposed as they may be on abstract principles of art, such managers can plausibly answer, referring to a play-book in which there are no stage directions, that the poet has left open the question of decoration, and that whatever they introduce in the shape of tableaux between the acts, processions, and panoramas, they have not sinned against the letter of his law. Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that, much as the taste for the higher drama has declined among the public, and much as the strength of theatrical companies has diminished, more genuine Shakspearian poetry has been heard on the London stage during the reign of Queen Victoria than during the reign of any other sovereign since Charles I. Within the last thirty years nearly the whole of Shakspeare's dramatic works, even including the doubtful *Pericles*, have been presented to the public essentially as written by the poet, whereas the plays exhibited to our fathers in an uncorrupted state were few indeed.

In this paper we design to pass in rapid review the principal alterations that were made in the most popular of Shakspeare's plays, on the London stage, beginning at the time when the closing of the theatres by the Puritans was followed by the formation of two companies—the "Duke's" and the "King's"—under the patents of Charles II.

During the first season of the Duke's company at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, opened by Sir W. Davenant in 1661, three of Shakspeare's plays were produced. One of them was *Hamlet*, in which the Danish prince was represented by the great Betterton, with whose name for many years it remained associated as one of his finest parts. This tragedy was played probably as Shakspeare wrote it; for even as late as 1673, when the Duke's company had removed from Lincoln's Inn Fields to a larger and more commodious theatre in Dorset Gardens, we find the Norwegian prince, Fortinbras, now invariably omitted, set down among the characters.

The other two Shakspearian plays were *Measure for Measure* and *Romeo and Juliet*, which were both presented in an altered shape. Why Sir William Davenant should have taken the trouble to convert the former of these plays into the *Law against Lovers*, it is hard to conjecture. All that could have interested the audience at Lincoln's Inn Fields belongs to the old play; and though a Beatrice and a Benedick are added to the characters, these are but faint shadows of their namesakes in *Much Ado about Nothing*, to whom they owe their existence. Of the *Law against Lovers* we hear nothing after the first year of its production, though it is to be found in Davenant's collected works. The altered version of *Romeo and Juliet*, played at Lincoln's Inn Fields, was by James Howard, son of the Earl of Berkshire, and brother to the Lady Elizabeth Howard, who married Dryden. The piece was never printed; but, thanks to Downes, the prompter, we know enough about it to conclude that the alterations were made to conciliate those sensitive persons among the public who would have every story come to a blissful termination. According to James Howard, Romeo and Juliet lived, married, and were happy. This modification, however, did not please everybody; so, to accommodate all tastes, the piece was played as a tragedy on one night, and as a tragi-comedy on another. There is one reason to regret the loss of Howard's play: among the characters enumerated by Downes is Count Paris's wife, and, as Count Paris is only of use to the plot as Juliet's suitor, accepted by her parents, one would like to know what he could have done with a better half. Was he, as well as Juliet, on the brink of bigamy, when his suit was encouraged by old Capulet?

It was not till within a very late period that this popular tragedy was performed as Shakspeare wrote it. In 1680 a tragedy by Otway called *Caius Marius* was brought out at Dorset Gardens, half of which the poet acknowledges as "rifled" from Shakspeare, though he does not mention the particular play on which his depredations were made. The hero is the celebrated Caius Marius, played by Betterton, and is altogether independent of Shakspeare; but his son, Marius Junior, and Lavinia,

daughter to Metellus, who wishes her to marry Sylla, are Romeo and Juliet transferred from mediæval Verona to ancient Rome. Friar Lawrence is converted into a priest of Hymen, and Meroutio, here called Sulpitius, discourses on Queen Mab in this fashion :—

Oh, the small queen of fairies  
Is busy in his brains ; the Mab that comes  
Drawn by a little train of smallest atoms  
Over men's noses as they lie asleep,  
In a chariot of an empty hazel-nut,  
Made by a joiner-squirrel in which state  
She gallops night by night through lovers' brains,  
And then how wickedly they dream all know  
Sometimes she courses o'er a courtier's nose,  
And then he dreams of begging an estate.  
Sometimes she hums o'er a soldier's neck,  
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
Of breaches, ambuscados, temper'd blades,  
Of good rich winter quarters and false musters.  
Sometimes she tweaks a poet by the ear,  
And then dreams he  
Of panegyrics, flattering dedications,  
And mighty presents from the Lord knows who,  
But wakes as empty as he laid him down  
She has been with Sylla too, and he dreams now  
Of nothing but a consulship

In writing the above, Otway seems to have had no other object than to lessen the fanciful character of the original speech. In the description of the apothecary, put into the mouth of Marius Junior, Shakspeare is more closely followed, though one can scarcely help being startled at the strange alteration made in the second line.

I do remember an apothecary,  
And hereabouts he dwells,

said Shakspeare, but this simple statement will not do for Otway, who thus gives it a fine French polish,—

I do remember an apothecary  
That dwelt about this rendezvous of death.

From the heading of the scene, we learn that the "rendezvous of death" was a "churchyard," which in the days of Sylla and Marius must have been a somewhat singular place. However, people were not particular with respect to details of time and place till long after the days of Thomas Otway. The beauty of the speech made it celebrated, and so completely had *Romeo and Juliet* been forgotten at the commencement of the eighteenth century, that the famous description of the apothecary was frequently cited as a passage by Otway, without the slightest suspicion that the real author was Shakspeare.

However, if Otway rifled Shakspeare, he suffered a reprisal rather more than sixty years afterwards. In 1744 *Romeo and Juliet*, under its original name, was produced at the Haymarket, after lying dormant



for one hundred years, according to the play-bills—for about eighty years in point of fact; but probably the piece at Lincoln's Inn Fields, rendered remarkable by the appearance of Paris's wife, had been forgotten. The tragedy, as now revived, was modified by Theophilus Cibber, who, in the last act, introduced a good lump of Otway. It is needless to remind the Shakspearian reader that, in the original play, Romeo dies before Juliet recovers from the effects of the drug. Marius Junior was more fortunate, for he lived long enough to enjoy a few minutes' converse with his dear Lavinia, and all that passed between the Roman lovers was given to the Veronese pair by the tender-hearted Theophilus.

This alteration of the fifth act of *Romeo and Juliet* by Cibber had a lasting effect. The meeting of the lovers was too striking a situation not to find favour in theatrical eyes, and when, four years after Cibber's revival, Garrick brought out a version of his own at Drury Lane, this situation was retained, though very little of Otway's language was adopted. Garrick's version held possession of the stage till within a very recent period; and there is no doubt that many a respectable old gentleman, whose play-going days are over, and who bestows but little time on the study of Elizabethan poetry, firmly believes that Juliet recovered from her trance to take leave of her dying Romeo, who, among other things, uttered the exclamation—“Fathers have flinty hearts.” The same old play-goer, if his memory does not fail him, will recount how, when the drop-scene rose for the fifth act, a bier containing the body of the unfortunate Juliet and surrounded by a forest of funereal feathers, was carried across the stage, accompanied on its passage by a dirge of the most doleful kind. Alas! all this, the “flinty hearts” inclusive, belonged to Garrick—not Shakspeare. We believe that it was under Mr. Macready's management of Drury Lane that the original last scene was restored, and we strongly suspect that Garrick's words are still uttered in some country theatres, and that there are provincial connoisseurs who, if they did not hear that “Fathers have flinty hearts,” would think that strange liberties had been taken with the text of Shakspeare.

The *Tempest*, by Dryden and Davenant, originally brought out at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1667, exercised an influence on the stage nearly as long as that of Otway's *Caius Marius* on *Romeo and Juliet*. In this piece the departure from Shakspeare is so very great, that it may be almost considered a new play, written on a Shakspearian basis, and adorned with Shakspearian passages. Miranda has a sister named Dorinda, who, like her, has never beheld a man, and that this kind of ignorance may not exclusively belong to the ladies, a certain Hippolito is introduced, who has been brought up by Prospero in a corner of the enchanted island, remote from his own dwelling, and has never beheld a woman. This Hippolito, though not aware of his own high condition, is the lawful heir to the dukedom of Mantua, which has been usurped by Alonzo, Duke of Savoy (not King of Sicily), and when Prospero recovers his rights, Hippolito is equally fortunate. Of course the young Mantuan falls in

love with Dorinda, but one of the effects of his secluded education has been a disposition to become a general lover of female beauty, and his naive determination to fall in love with Miranda, as well as her sister, involves him in a quarrel with Ferdinand, which turns out so unluckily that he receives a dangerous sword-wound, and would certainly die, were he not healed by a singular process.

The charm by which Hippolito is saved from death is too curious not to merit a slight digression, connected as it is with a superstition not now generally known. Prospero, believing the young man to be really dead, threatens to avenge his fate by the death of Ferdinand, and is very indignant with Ariel, whose neglect has occasioned the encounter. Ariel, however, having discovered that there is yet life in the supposed corpse, thus addresses his master :—

When I was chidden by my mighty lord  
For my neglect of young Hippolito,  
I went to view his body, and soon found  
His soul was but retired, not sallied out.  
Then I collected  
The best of simples underneath the moon,  
The best of balmes, and to the wound applied  
The healing juice of vulnerary herbs ;  
His only danger was his loss of blood  
But now he's waked, my lord, and at this hour  
He must be dress'd again, as I have done it  
Anoint the sword which pierc'd him with this weapon-salve,  
And wrap it close from air till I have time  
To visit him again.

The way in which the charm operates is shown in the following scene. Miranda, charged by her father, takes the sword wrapped up to Hippolito, who is faint with loss of blood, when the following dialogue occurs.—

*Hip* Oh ! my wound pains me  
*Mir.* I am come to cure you [ *She unwraps the sword.*  
*Hip* Alas, I feel the cold air come to me,  
My wound shoots worse than ever [ *She wipes and anoints the sword.*  
*Mir* Does it still grieve you ?  
*Hip* Now methinks there's something  
Laid just upon it.  
*Mir* Do you find no ease ?  
*Hip* Yes, yes ! upon the sudden all the pain  
Is leaving me Sweet heaven, how I am eased !

In several old plays reference is made to the cure of wounds by anointing the offending weapon, but probably this is the most complete illustration of the superstition.

As we learn in the case of *enfants terribles*, perfect innocence will frequently cause the utterance of impudent things, and the dialogue of the innocent ladies and the guileless youth is seasoned with a great many of those pleasantries which were highly acceptable to the Court of Charles II.,

but which occasion the retirement of most plays written in his reign to the most inaccessible shelves of our bookcases. Caliban is blest with a twin sister, named (after his deceased mother) Syceorax, who is a most disgusting personage, and marries Trinculo, who is not a butler but a boatswain. Stephano, not a fool, but the shipmaster, sinks into comparative insignificance, and two other sailors are saved from the wreck. The endeavours of Trinculo to found a duchy of which he himself is the duke, and the political difficulties which he encounters, give rise to scenes which are by no means void of humour, and which were doubtless intended to satirize the imaginary republics that occupied many heads about the time of the Commonwealth.

The best way to enjoy Dryden and Davenant's play is to think as little as possible about Shakspeare during its perusal. When it is finished, and the thought of the old *Tempest* rushes back upon the mind, one may fairly wonder how so much complicated indecency could possibly have been preferred to one of the most chaste and beautiful works that ever poet created.

In the year 1746, Shakspeare's *Tempest* was revived at Drury Lane, but we cannot suppose that it found much favour, since in the following year Dryden and Davenant's work was revived at the same house by Garrick, who did not play in the piece, and could not therefore have been influenced by professional vanity. In 1756 there was something like a return to Shakspeare, for an "opera called the *Tempest*" was brought out at Drury Lane, in which, though some of Dryden's additions were retained, the intruders Hippolito and Dorinda were omitted, and in 1757 the play itself was performed in its original shape, and seems to have retained possession of the stage, at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden, till the winter of 1789, when an adaptation by Mr. John Kemble was produced. This new version, in which Hippolito and Dorinda again made their appearance, and which altogether was a sort of compromise between Shakspeare and Dryden, was the recognized *Tempest* of the stage till Mr. Macready revived the original play at Covent Garden.

There is no doubt that all vestiges of Dryden's play are now swept away for ever. The *Tempest* is more familiar to the present generation than to the last, since it affords opportunities for those elaborate decorations which are so much to the taste of modern play-goers, and has therefore been a favourite play with modern managers. Kemble's version, though occasionally performed, was not familiar to the general public when Mr. Macready's revival took place, and this was followed by successful representations of the original play at the Princess's and Sadler's Wells, under the respective managements of Mr. Charles Kean and Mr. Phelps.

Far otherwise is it with *Richard III.*, of which Colley Cibber's version, in spite of every effort to revive the text of Shakspeare, is the acknowledged play for the stage. Nor is it likely to lose its supremacy, for it happens that the Richard, with whom the names of the great old actors are associated, and who remained for years before the public, the object of universal admiration, when everybody went to the play, is

emphatically the Richard of Cibber, for whom the Richard of Shakspeare's "history" offers no equivalent. With the *Tempest*, a piece not very frequently acted, the substitution of one version for another could be effected without difficulty. The obliteration of the last interview between Romeo and Juliet, which had drawn tears down so many fair cheeks for so many years, was a bolder movement in the Shakspearian direction, and play-goers might possibly be offended to learn that Romeo was once in love with a certain Rosaline, when the commonly acted play had conveyed the impression that his first love was Juliet. Nevertheless the two lovers, according to Garrick, were essentially the same as their Shakspearian prototypes, and the operation, though painful, was still bearable. But when the hand of the restorer was laid on *Richard III.*, what could people think of a Gloster who neither murdered Henry VI. before their eyes, nor uttered the famous speech about conscience, nor said, "Off with his head, so much for Buckingham," nor exclaimed, "Richard's himself again," when he had overcome his terror at the ghosts, and who filled up the measure of his iniquities by dying without a word, whereas the familiar Cibberian Richard had employed his last breath in the delivery of a celebrated speech. Literary men might talk; but this restored Richard was in the eyes of the multitude a fleshless intruder, who never could rival the popularity of the old usurper, nor did tragic actors greatly care to represent him. Cibber's Richard is the Gloster of Garrick, Cook, and Kean, and the other is not like him.

We need not describe at length an altered play, which to many persons is much more familiar than the original. It may be observed that the alterations are made for the sole purpose of giving increased importance to the principal character at the expense of the rest. Other plays may have been modified with a view of conciliating the audience, but in the case of *Richard III.* the actor's desire to be as conspicuous as possible is pre-eminently consulted, and thus all inducement to attempt a restoration is cut off at the fountain-head. When the piece was first brought out at Drury Lane in 1700, no other Richard having been seen since the days of Charles I. at the latest, Cibber nearly marred the effect of his own labours by playing the crook-backed tyrant himself, for, though he gained a high reputation in comedy, he was never esteemed as a tragedian. However, his failure could not destroy the predilection for a character which was literally studded over with points, and Cibber's *Richard III.* retained an undisputed possession of the stage till 1821, when an abortive attempt made to restore the original play at Covent Garden rather confirmed than diminished its popularity. A similar attempt, though with fair success, was made by Mr. Phelps at Sadler's Wells at a more recent period, and great commendation was bestowed by the critics on this truly Shakspearian manager. But the Richard to which people had been accustomed was not to be displaced, and Porson's remark, made in imitation of a well-known passage in Homer, that "if the persons who have only read Cibber's *Richard III.* were divided into companies of ten, and if every one who had

read the original play were to wait upon a company, many decades would go without a cup-bearer," remains substantially true to the present day.

Whatever obloquy is cast upon Cibber for effecting so permanent a corruption of the text of the great national poet, there is no doubt that he was "wise in his generation," and that he did his work in a spirit of veneration for the Bard of Avon, of which not a trace is to be found in Dryden's *Tempest*. The scene between Gloster and Henry, terminating in the murder of the latter and the speech uttered by the king when dying on Bosworth Field, are at any rate Shakspeare's, though they are not to be found in Shakspeare's *Richard III.*; the former having been taken from the third part of *Henry VI.*, the latter from a speech by Northumberland in the second part of *Henry IV.* As for the soliloquy on conscience, it is pure Cibber.

It is an exceptional fact, that one portion of Shakspeare's play omitted by Cibber has gained as wide a popularity as the parts he has retained. This is Clarence's celebrated description of his own dream, which is to be found in all the collectanea of poetical "beauties" that have been compiled for the instruction of youth. We read that when the speech was heard for the first time on the stage, in 1821, it was received with much applause, and we might therefore be justified in assuming that by omitting it Cibber showed his deficiency not only in poetical feeling, but in worldly tact. But no doubt he reflected that Clarence is a comparatively insignificant personage, and that a long speech, not essential to the action of a play, is likely to be found tedious, when put into the mouth of a secondary actor. In 1821 Clarence's dream had all the charm of novelty, as far as the stage was concerned, and it is highly questionable whether the pleasure it caused would have been heightened by familiarity.

*Macbeth*, which was, it seems, played as Shakspeare wrote it by the Duke's company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, was shortly after their removal to Dorset Gardens, brought out as an "opera," that is to say, with mechanical accessories, and with those musical additions which have remained till the present time, the words of the choruses being chiefly taken from Middleton's play of the *Witch*. Davenant, who was the author of this version, altered the text without scruple, often without apparent motive, and even introduced new situations. For instance, Lady Macbeth, perpetually haunted by Duncan's ghost, urges her husband to resign his crown, and as the shade of Banquo is invisible to the lady, so by way of compensation is the ghost of Duncan invisible to Macbeth. It is a curious fact that when this "opera" was first produced at Dorset Gardens in 1672, Banquo was played by one actor and his ghost by another.

For more than eighty years Davenant's *Macbeth* retained possession of the stage, and the original text was so generally forgotten, that when David Garrick announced that, on the 7th January, 1744, he was about to revive *Macbeth* as originally written by Shakspeare, his rival Quin exclaimed with surprise, "What does he mean? Don't I play *Macbeth* as written by Shakspeare?" Garrick's reform did not extend to the

abolition of the choruses, and it is to his restoration that we owe the form of *Macbeth* adopted at the present day. Davenant's version does not seem to have been revived after the restoration of the original play; but no manager save Mr. Phelps, of Sadler's Wells, has ventured to lay hands on the music. It should be remembered, that except in the caldron-scene, the choruses do not at all interfere with the action of the piece, but ~~forming~~ <sup>forming</sup> between the acts; and that the caldron-scene itself is not one in which the actor expects to produce any great effect. There is no doubt that the old-fashioned music, popularly ascribed to Locke, affords pleasure to a great many persons, and probably it was the opinion both of Mr. Macready and of Mr. Charles Kean that by the omission of this comparatively harmless accessory some persons would be deprived of a gratification for which no very palpable compensation could be offered.

The fact is perhaps worth mentioning that at Covent Garden in the year 1778 *Macbeth* first appeared in Scottish attire, having till that time been universally dressed as a modern military officer. This early step towards a reformation of costume was made by Macklin, who played *Macbeth* on the occasion. The portrait of Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard playing *Macbeth* and his lady in the dresses of the eighteenth century must be familiar to many of our readers.

If in the case of *Richard III.* a sweeping alteration of Shakspeare was made to gratify the ambition of the actor—in the first instance Colley Cibber himself—*King Lear* was still more strangely metamorphosed by Nahum Tate, with a view of sparing the feelings of the public. Nahum Tate, one of the authors of the collection of psalms usually bound up with the Common Prayer-book, evidently thought it contrary to the principles of dramatic justice, that the old British king, who had done so very little wrong, should be visited with such awful calamity. The world as exhibited in the play was out of joint, and honest Nahum did not, like Hamlet, think it was a cursed spite, that he was born to set it right, but undertook the work of improvement with great complacency, and at last achieved a *King Lear* with a happy termination, which was brought out at Dorset Gardens in 1681. In the last scene of this notable version Lear is discovered asleep, with his head on Cordelia's lap, when a party of villanous soldiers enter with intent to murder them. Lear, jumping up and seizing a partizan, finds himself strong enough to knock down two of the ruffians, and is then assisted by the virtuous personages of the story, who rush upon the stage. All who deserve happiness are made happy, and Edgar, whose love for Cordelia is one of the chief points of interest in Tate's version, is rewarded with her hand.

Addison, in the *Spectator*, expresses his opinion that Tate's improvement has ~~degraded~~ <sup>diminished</sup> the tragedy of half its beauty; but such was not the general view in the last century. "The public," said Dr. Johnson, "has decided in favour of Tate;" and so long was it assumed that Lear had been saved from an unhappy death by the voice of the nation, that in the *Biographia Dramatica* (published in 1812) the writer not only records the

fact that "in spite of the sentiments of critics, the alteration still maintains its ground;" but adds the opinion, "it is far from certainty that the catastrophe as originally penned by Shakspeare could be borne by a modern audience."

Several attempts were made to modify Tate's version of *King Lear*. Garrick brought it out at Drury Lane in 1756, with what he called "restorations from Shakspeare;" and this improved version remained in possession of the stage for fifty years; for although in 1768 Colman attempted to effect a compromise between Shakspeare and Tate by abolishing the loves of Cordelia and Edgar, while he retained the happy catastrophe, the public were not to be balked of the amatory tale, to which they had been accustomed, and Tate, as improved by Garrick, remained triumphant. As for a version made by John Kemble early in the present century, it was further removed from Shakspeare than Garrick's.

It was not till the year 1828, when the principal character was played by Mr. Edmund Kean, that Lear and Cordelia were allowed to die miserably as Shakspeare intended them, but even then the restoration of the original was confined to the fifth act, and Tate's love-scenes were retained. Under Mr. Macready's management of Covent Garden, Shakspeare's tragedy in its pristine shape was played for the first time since the days of Charles I. The good people died as in duty bound; Edgar's heart was unmoved by the charms of Cordelia, and, what was most surprising of all, the Fool reappeared, admirably represented by Miss F. Horton. Garrick had indeed contemplated the restoration of this long-omitted and eminently interesting part, but abandoned the idea as dangerous. Colman's thoughts once led him in the same direction; but in the preface to his unfortunate version, he expressed his conviction that such a character would not be endured on a modern stage. Even Mr. Genest, the anonymous author of the *Account of the British Stage* (published in 1832), though he is sometimes fanatical in the cause of Shakspeare, is of opinion that the Fool was properly omitted by Tate. No sooner, however, did this terrible Fool reappear, than he was heartily welcomed, nor would any manager at the present day dream of leaving him out. Both at the Princess's under Mr. Charles Kean, and at Sadler's Wells under Mr. Phelps, he was to be found as a matter of course.

With *Hamlet*, which we have seen was played as late as 1678 in a state of even greater integrity than at present, and with *Othello*, fewer liberties have been taken than with most of Shakspeare's plays. The most serious attempt at an alteration of the former was made by Garrick, who in 1772 produced a version at Drury Lane, in which the gravediggers and Osric were omitted, and which, endowed with a temporary popularity by the performance of the celebrated actor, remained on the stage for a few years after his retirement in 1776. But in 1780, the comic personages resumed their ancient right to be seen, and we hear of no subsequent alteration. Neither are we aware that any attempt has been made to restore Fortinbras, whom we find at Dorset Gardens late in the seventeenth century, and

to whom some German critics attach the utmost importance, insisting that as the man of action he stands in contrast to Hamlet as the man of contemplation, and is therefore required to carry out the full meaning of the poet. In spite, however, of all æsthetical reasoning, there is this practical objection to Fortinbras, in common with Clarence (in *Richard III.*), that he could not be assigned to an actor who would render him an interesting figure. To the poetical student objections of this kind appear simply abominable; but it may be observed once for all, that the interests of poetry and of the stage move in lines, which, however they may approximate, never entirely coalesce.

The *Merchant of Venice* was for a long time superseded by the *Jew of Venice*, an adaptation by Lord Lansdowne, brought out in 1701 at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, to which the principal actors of the time had seceded about six years before, in consequence of a quarrel with the patentees of the Theatre Royal. In this version Bassanio was considered the principal character, and was assigned to Betterton, while Shylock, regarded as a comic part, was represented by the low comedian Dogget, whose name is still familiar to the watermen of the Thames. The restoration of the tragic Shylock is due to Macklin, who revived the *Merchant of Venice* at Drury Lane in 1741, in opposition to the most experienced advisers, and achieved such a marvellous success by his performance of the Jew, that Lansdowne's piece was thenceforth banished from the stage. Pope's exclamation in reference to Macklin,—

This is the Jew  
That Shakspeare drew,—

has almost passed into a proverb. For many years, however, the scenes in which Portia's unsuccessful suitors successively choose the wrong caskets were omitted, the close approximation to Shakspeare which is now made whenever the play is performed having been first effected by the managers of the present generation. The practical value of the restoration consists in the heightened development in the character of Portia, of which it is the occasion.

During the first quarter of this century, several of Shakspeare's comedies were produced in what was then considered an operatic form, and were rendered extremely popular by the music of Bishop and the singing of Miss Stephens and Miss M. Tree. The author of many, if not all, of these versions was Mr. Reynolds the dramatist, and his task generally consisted in the compression of five acts into three, and the introduction of songs, the words of which were usually Shakspeare's, though not perhaps belonging to the particular play in which they were sung. In these pieces the action was not essentially modified, and as they were rather abridgments than alterations, there is no need to review them in detail.







"WONT YOU TAKE SOME MORE WINE?"





## The Small House at Allington.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### THE WOUNDED FAWN.



**N**EARLY two months passed away, and it was now Christmas time at Allington. It may be presumed that there was no intention at either house that the mirth should be very loud. Such a wound as that received by Lily Dale was one from which recovery could not be quick, and it was felt by all the family that a weight was upon them which made gaiety impracticable. As for Lily herself it may be said that she bore her misfortune with all a woman's courage. For the first week she stood up as a tree that stands against the wind, which is soon to be shivered to pieces because it will

not bend. During that week her mother and sister were frightened by her calmness and endurance. She would perform her daily task. She would go out through the village, and appear at her place in church on the first Sunday. She would sit over her book of an evening, keeping back her tears; and would chide her mother and sister when she found that they were regarding her with earnest anxiety.

"Mamma, let it all be as though it had never been," she said.

"Ah, dear! if that were but possible!"

"God forbid that it should be possible inwardly," Lily replied. "But it is possible outwardly. I feel that you are more tender to me than you used to be, and that upsets me. If you would only scold me because I am idle, I should soon be better." But her mother could not speak to her as she perhaps might have spoken had no grief fallen upon her pet. She

could not cease from those anxious tender glances which made Lily know that she was looked on as a fawn wounded almost to death.

At the end of the first week she gave way. "I won't get up, Bell," she said one morning, almost petulantly. "I am ill;—I had better lie here out of the way. Don't make a fuss about it. I'm stupid and foolish, and that makes me ill."

Whereupon Mrs. Dale and Bell were frightened, and looked into each other's blank faces, remembering stories of poor broken-hearted girls who had died because their loves had been unfortunate,—as small wax tapers whose lights are quenched if a breath of wind blows upon them too strongly. But then Lily was in truth no such slight taper as that. Nor was she the stem that must be broken because it will not bend. She bent herself to the blast during that week of illness, and then arose with her form still straight and graceful, and with her bright light unquenched.

After that she would talk more openly to her mother about her loss,—openly and with a true appreciation of the misfortune which had befallen her; but with an assurance of strength which seemed to ridicule the idea of a broken heart. "I know that I can bear it," she said, "and that I can bear it without lasting unhappiness. Of course I shall always love him, and must feel almost as you felt when you lost my father."

In answer to this Mrs. Dale could say nothing. She could not speak out her thoughts about Crosbie, and explain to Lily that he was unworthy of her love. Love does not follow worth, and is not given to excellence;—nor is it destroyed by ill-usage, nor killed by blows and mutilation. When Lily declared that she still loved the man who had so ill-used her, Mrs. Dale would be silent. Each perfectly understood the other, but on that matter even they could not interchange their thoughts with freedom.

"You must promise never to be tired of me, mamma," said Lily.

"Mothers do not often get tired of their children, whatever the children may do of their mothers."

"I'm not so sure of that when the children turn out old maids. And I mean to have a will of my own; too, mamma; and a way also, if it be possible. When Bell is married I shall consider it a partnership, and I shan't do what I'm told any longer."

"Forewarned will be forearmed."

"Exactly;—and I don't want to take you by surprise. For a year or two longer, till Bell is gone, I mean to be dutiful; but it would be very stupid for a person to be dutiful all their lives."

All of which Mrs. Dale understood thoroughly. It amounted to an assertion on Lily's part that she had loved once and could never love again; that she had played her game, hoping, as other girls hope, that she might win the prize of a husband; but that, having lost, she could never play the game again. It was that inward conviction on Lily's part which made her say such words to her mother. But Mrs. Dale would by no means allow herself to share this conviction. She declared to herself that

time would cure Lily's wound, and that her child might yet be crowned by the bliss of a happy marriage. She would not in her heart consent to that plan in accordance with which Lily's destiny in life was to be regarded as already fixed. She had never really liked Crosbie as a suitor, and would herself have preferred John Eames, with all the faults of his hobbledohoyhood on his head. It might yet come to pass that John Eames' love might be made happy.

But in the meantime Lily, as I have said, had become strong in her courage, and recommenced the work of living with no lackadaisical self-assurance that because she had been made more unhappy than others, therefore she should allow herself to be more idle. Morning and night she prayed for him, and daily, almost hour by hour, she assured herself that it was still her duty to love him. It was hard, this duty of loving, without any power of expressing such love. But still she would do her duty. "Tell me at once, mamma," she said one morning, "when you hear that the day is fixed for his marriage. Pray don't keep me in the dark."

"It is to be in February," said Mrs. Dale.

"But let me know the day. It must not be to me like ordinary days. But do not look unhappy, mamma; I am not going to make a fool of myself. I shan't steal off and appear in the church like a ghost." And then, having uttered her little joke, a sob came, and she hid her face on her mother's bosom. In a moment she raised it again. "Believe me, mamma, that I am not unhappy," she said.

After the expiration of that second week Mrs. Dale did write a letter to Crosbie;

I suppose (she said) it is right that I should acknowledge the receipt of your letter. I do not know that I have aught else to say to you. It would not become me as a woman to say what I think of your conduct, but I believe that your conscience will tell you the same things. If it do not, you must, indeed, be hardened. I have promised my child that I will send to you a message from her. She bids me tell you that she has forgiven you, and that she does not hate you. May God also forgive you, and may you recover his love.

MARY DALE.

I beg that no rejoinder may be made to this letter, either to myself or to any of my family.

The squire wrote no answer to the letter which he had received, nor did he take any steps towards the immediate punishment of Crosbie. Indeed he had declared that no such steps could be taken, explaining to his nephew that such a man could be served only as one serves a rat.

"I shall never see him," he said once again; "if I did, I should not scruple to hit him on the head with my stick; but I should think ill of myself to go after him with such an object."

And yet it was a terrible sorrow to the old man that the scoundrel who had so injured him and his should escape scot-free. He had not forgiven Crosbie. No idea of forgiveness had ever crossed his mind. He

would have hated himself had he thought it possible that he could be induced to forgive such an injury. "There is an amount of rascality in it,—of low meanness, which I do not understand," he would say over and over again to his nephew. And then as he would walk alone on the ~~place~~ <sup>place</sup> he would speculate within his own mind whether Bernard would take any steps towards avenging his cousin's injury. "He is right," he would say to himself; "Bernard is quite right. But when I was young I could not have stood it. In those days a gentleman might have a fellow out who had treated him as he has treated us. A man was satisfied in feeling that he had done something. I suppose the world is different now-a-days." The world is different; but the squire by no means acknowledged in his heart that there had been any improvement.

Bernard also was greatly troubled in his mind. He would have had no objection to fight a duel with Crosbie, had duels in these days been possible. But he believed them to be no longer possible,—at any rate without ridicule. And if he could not fight the man, in what other way was he to punish him? Was it not the fact that for such a fault the world afforded no punishment? Was it not in the power of a man like Crosbie to amuse himself for a week or two at the expense of a girl's happiness for life, and then to escape absolutely without any ill effects to himself? "I shall be barred out of my club lest I should meet him," Bernard said to himself, "but he will not be barred out." Moreover, there was a feeling within him that the matter would be one of triumph to Crosbie rather than otherwise. In having secured for himself the pleasure of his courtship with such a girl as Lily Dale, without encountering the penalty usually consequent upon such amusement, he would be held by many as having merited much admiration. He had sinned against all the Dales, and yet the suffering arising from his sin was to fall upon the Dales exclusively. Such was Bernard's reasoning, as he speculated on the whole affair, sadly enough,—wishing to be avenged, but not knowing where to look for vengeance. For myself I believe him to have been altogether wrong as to the light in which he supposed that Crosbie's falsehood would be regarded by Crosbie's friends. Men will still talk of such things lightly, professing that all is fair in love as it is in war, and speaking almost with envy of the good fortunes of a practised deceiver. But I have never come across the man who thought in this way with reference to an individual case. Crosbie's own judgment as to the consequences to himself of what he had done was more correct than that formed by Bernard Dale. He had regarded the act as venial as long as it was still to do, while it was still within his power to leave it undone; but from the moment of its accomplishment it had forced itself upon his own view in its proper light. He knew that he had been a scoundrel, and he knew that other men would so think of him. His friend Fowler Pratt, who had the reputation of looking at women simply as toys, had so regarded him. Instead of boasting of what he had done, he was as afraid of alluding to any matter connected with his marriage as a man is of talking



of the articles which he has stolen. He had already felt that men at his club looked askance at him; and, though he was no coward as regarded his own skin and bones, he had an undefined fear lest some day he might encounter Bernard Dale purposely armed with a stick. The squire and his nephew were wrong in supposing that Crosbie was unpunished.

And as the winter came on he felt that he was closely watched by the noble family of De Courcy. Some of that noble family he had already learned to hate cordially. The Honourable John came up to town in November and persecuted him vilely;—insisted on having dinners given to him at Sebright's, of smoking throughout the whole afternoon in his future brother-in-law's rooms, and on borrowing his future brother-in-law's possessions; till at last Crosbie determined that it would be wise to quarrel with the Honourable John,—and he quarrelled with him accordingly, turning him out of his rooms, and telling him in so many words that he would have no more to do with him.

"You'll have to do it, as I did," Mortimer Gazebee had said to him; "I didn't like it because of the family, but Lady Amelia told me that it must be so." Whereupon Crosbie took the advice of Mortimer Gazebee.

But the hospitality of the Gazebees was perhaps more distressing to him than even the importunities of the Honourable John. It seemed as though his future sister-in-law was determined not to leave him alone. Mortimer was sent to fetch him up for the Sunday afternoons, and he found that he was constrained to go to the villa in St. John's Wood, even in opposition to his own most strenuous will. He could not quite analyze the circumstances of his own position, but he felt as though he were a cock with his spurs cut off,—as a dog with his teeth drawn. He found himself becoming humble and meek. He had to acknowledge to himself that he was afraid of Lady Amelia, and almost even afraid of Mortimer Gazebee. He was aware that they watched him, and knew all his goings out and comings in. They called him Adolphus, and made him tame. That coming evil day in February was dinned into his ears. Lady Amelia would go and look at furniture for him, and talked by the hour about bedding and sheets. "You had better get your kitchen things at Tomkins'. They're all good, and he'll give you ten per cent. off if you pay him ready money,—which of course you will, you know!" Was it for this that he had sacrificed Lily Dale?—for this that he had allied himself with the noble house of De Courcy?

Mortimer had been at him about the settlements from the very first moment of his return to London, and had already bound him up hand and foot. His life was insured, and the policy was in Mortimer's hands. His own little bit of money had been already handed over to be tied up with Lady Alexandrina's little bit. It seemed to him that in all the arrangements made the intention was that he should die off speedily, and that Lady Alexandrina should be provided with a decent little income, sufficient for St. John's Wood. Things were to be so settled that he could

not even spend the proceeds of his own money, or of hers. They were to go, under the fostering hand of Mortimer Gazebee, in paying insurances. If he would only die the day after his marriage, there would really be a very nice sum of money for Alexandrina, almost worthy of the acceptance of an earl's daughter. Six months ago he would have considered himself able to turn Mortimer Gazebee round his finger on any subject that could be introduced between them. When they chanced to meet Gazebee had been quite humble to him, treating him almost as a superior being. He had looked down on Gazebee from a very great height. But now it seemed as though he were powerless in this man's hands.

But perhaps the countess had become his greatest aversion. She was perpetually writing to him little notes in which she gave him multitudes of commissions, sending him about as though he had been her servant. And she pestered him with advice which was even worse than her commissions, telling him of the style of life in which Alexandrina would expect to live, and warning him very frequently that such an one as he could not expect to be admitted within the bosom of so noble a family without paying very dearly for that inestimable privilege. Her letters had become odious to him, and he would chuck them on one side, leaving them for the whole day unopened. He had already made up his mind that he would quarrel with the countess also, very shortly after his marriage; indeed, that he would separate himself from the whole family if it were possible. And yet he had entered into this engagement mainly with the view of reaping those advantages which would accrue to him from being allied to the De Courcys! The squire and his nephew were wretched in thinking that this man was escaping without punishment, but they might have spared themselves that misery.

It had been understood from the first that he was to spend his Christmas at Courcy Castle. From this undertaking it was quite out of his power to enfranchise himself; but he resolved that his visit should be as short as possible. Christmas Day unfortunately came on a Monday, and it was known to the De Courcy world that Saturday was almost a *die non* at the General Committee Office. As to those three days there was no escape for him; but he made Alexandrina understand that the three Commissioners were men of iron as to any extension of those three days. "I must be absent again in February, of course," he said, almost making his wail audible in the words he used, "and therefore it is quite impossible that I should stay now beyond the Monday." Had there been attractions for him at Courcy Castle I think he might have arranged with Mr. Optimist for a week or ten days. "We shall be all alone," the countess wrote to him, "and I hope you will have an opportunity of learning more of our ways than you have ever really been able to do as yet." This was bitter as gall to him. But in this world all valuable commodities have their price; and when men such as Crosbie aspire to obtain for themselves an alliance with noble families, they must pay the market price for the article which they purchase.

"You'll all come up and dine with us on Monday," the squire said to Mrs. Dale, about the middle of the previous week.

"Well, I think not," said Mrs. Dale; "we are better, perhaps, as we are."

At this moment the squire and his sister-in-law were on much more friendly terms than had been usual with them, and he took her reply in good part, understanding her feeling. Therefore, he pressed his request, and succeeded.

"I think you're wrong," he said; "I don't suppose that we shall have a very merry Christmas. You and the girls will hardly have that, whether you eat your pudding here or at the Great House. But it will be better for us all to make the attempt. It's the right thing to do. That's the way I look at it."

"I'll ask Lily," said Mrs. Dale.

"Do, do. Give her my love, and tell her from me that, in spite of all that has come and gone, Christmas Day should still be to her a day of rejoicing. We'll dine about three, so that the servants can have the afternoon."

"Of course we'll go," said Lily; "why not? We always do. And we'll have blind-man's-buff with all the Boyces, as we had last year, if uncle will ask them up." But the Boyces were not asked up for that occasion.

But Lily, though she put on it all so brave a face, had much to suffer, and did in truth suffer greatly. If you, my reader, ever chanced to slip into the gutter on a wet day, did you not find that the sympathy of the bystanders was by far the severest part of your misfortune? Did you not declare to yourself that all might yet be well, if the people would only walk on and not look at you? And yet you cannot blame those who stood and pitied you; or, perhaps, essayed to rub you down, and assist you in the recovery of your bedaubed hat. You, yourself, if you see a man fall, cannot walk by as though nothing uncommon had happened to him. It was so with Lily. The people of Allington could not regard her with their ordinary eyes. They would look at her tenderly, knowing that she was a wounded fawn, and thus they aggravated the soreness of her wound. Old Mrs. Hearn condoled with her, telling her that very likely she would be better off as she was. Lily would not lie about it in any way. "Mrs. Hearn," she said, "the subject is painful to me." Mrs. Hearn said no more about it, but on every meeting between them she looked the things she did not say. "Miss Lily!" said Hopkins, one day, "Miss Lily!"—and as he looked up into her face a tear had almost formed itself in his old eye—"I knew what he was from the first. Oh, dear! oh, dear! if I could have had him killed!" "Hopkins, how dare you?" said Lily. "If you speak to me again in such a way, I will tell my uncle." She turned away from him; but immediately turned back again, and put out her little hand to him. "I beg your pardon," she said. "I know how kind you are, and I love you for it." And then

she went away. "I'll go after him yet, and break the dirty neck of him," said Hopkins to himself, as he walked down the path.

Shortly before Christmas day she called, with her sister, at the vicarage. Bell, in the course of the visit, left the room with one of the Boyce girls, to look at the last chrysanthemums of the year. Then Mrs. Boyce took advantage of the occasion to make her little speech. "My dear Lily," she said, "you will think me cold if I do not say one word to you." "No, I shall not," said Lily, almost sharply, shrinking from the finger that threatened to touch her sore. "There are things which should never be talked about." "Well, well; perhaps so," said Mrs. Boyce. But for a minute or two she was unable to fall back upon any other topic, and sat looking at Lily with painful tenderness. I need hardly say what were Lily's sufferings under such a gaze; but she bore it, acknowledging to herself in her misery that the fault did not lay with Mrs. Boyce. How could Mrs. Boyce have looked at her otherwise than tenderly?

It was settled, then, that Lily was to dine up at the Great House on Christmas Day, and thus show to the Allington world that she was not to be regarded as a person shut out from the world by the depth of her misfortune. That she was right there can, I think, be no doubt; but as she walked across the little bridge, with her mother and sister, after returning from church, she would have given much to be able to have turned round, and have gone to bed instead of to her uncle's dinner.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### PAWKINS'S IN JERNYN STREET.

THE show of fat beasts in London took place this year on the twentieth day of December, and I have always understood that a certain bullock exhibited by Lord De Guest was declared by the metropolitan butchers to have realized all the possible excellences of breeding, feeding, and condition. No doubt the butchers of the next half-century will have learned much better, and the Guestwick beast, could it be embalmed and then produced, would excite only ridicule at the agricultural ignorance of the present age; but Lord De Guest took the praise that was offered to him, and found himself in a seventh heaven of delight. He was never so happy as when surrounded by butchers, graziers, and salesmen who were able to appreciate the work of his life, and who regarded him as a model nobleman. "Look at that fellow," he said to Eames, pointing to the prize bullock. Eames had joined his patron at the show after his office hours, looking on upon the living beef by gaslight. "Isn't he like his sire? He was got by Lambkin, you know."

"Lambkin," said Johnny, who had not as yet been able to learn much about the Guestwick stock.

"Yes, Lambkin. The bull that we had the trouble with. He has just got his sire's back and fore-quarters. Don't you see?"

"I daresay," said Johnny, who looked very hard, but could not see.

"It's very odd," exclaimed the earl, "but do you know, that bull has been as quiet since that day,—as quiet as—anything. I think it must have been my pocket-handkerchief."

"I daresay it was," said Johnny;—"or perhaps the flies."

"Flies!" said the earl, angrily. "Do you suppose he isn't used to flies? Come away. I ordered dinner at seven, and it's past six now. My brother-in-law, Colonel Dale, is up in town, and he dines with us." So he took Johnny's arm, and led him off through the show, calling his attention as he went to several beasts which were inferior to his own.

And then they walked down through Portman Square and Grosvenor Square, and across Piccadilly to Jermyn Street. John Eames acknowledged to himself that it was odd that he should have an earl leaning on his arm as he passed along through the streets. At home, in his own life, his daily companions were Cradell and Amelia Roper, Mrs. Lupex and Mrs. Roper. The difference was very great, and yet he found it quite as easy to talk to the earl as to Mrs. Lupex.

"You know the Dales down at Allington of course," said the earl.

"Oh, yes, I know them."

"But, perhaps, you never met the colonel."

"I don't think I ever did."

"He's a queer sort of fellow;—very well in his way, but he never does anything. He and my sister live at Torquay, and as far as I can find out they neither of them have any occupation of any sort. He's come up to town now because we both had to meet our family lawyers and sign some papers, but he looks on the journey as a great hardship. As for me, I'm a year older than he is, but I wouldn't mind going up and down from Guestwick every day."

"It's looking after the bull that does it," said Eames.

"By George! you're right, Master Johnny. My sister and Crofts may tell me what they like, but when a man's out in the open air for eight or nine hours every day, it doesn't much matter where he goes to sleep after that. This is Pawkins',—capital good house, but not so good as it used to be while old Pawkins was alive. Show Mr. Eames up into a bedroom to wash his hands."

Colonel Dale was much like his brother in face, but was taller, even thinner, and apparently older. When Eames went into the sitting-room, the colonel was there alone, and had to take upon himself the trouble of introducing himself. He did not get up from his arm-chair, but nodded gently at the young man. "Mr. Eames, I believe? I knew your father at Guestwick, a great many years ago;" then he turned his face back towards the fire and sighed.

"It's got very cold this afternoon," said Johnny, trying to make conversation.

## THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON.

"It's always told in London," said the colonel.

"If you had to be here in August you wouldn't say so."

"God forbid," said the colonel, and he sighed again, with his eyes fixed upon the fire. Eames had heard of the very gallant way in which Orlando Dale had persisted in running away with Lord De Guest's sister, in opposition to very terrible obstacles, and as he now looked at the ill-fated lover, he thought that there must have been a great change since those days. After that nothing more was said till the earl came down.

Pawkins' house was thoroughly old-fashioned in all things, and the Pawkins of that day himself stood behind the earl's elbow when the dinner began, and himself removed the cover from the soup tureen. Lord De Guest did not require much personal attention, but he would have felt annoyed if this hadn't been done. As it was he had a civil word to say to Pawkins about the fat cattle, thereby showing that he did not mistake Pawkins for one of the waiters. Pawkins then took his lordship's orders about the wine and retired.

"He keeps up the old house pretty well," said the earl to his brother-in-law. "It isn't like what it was thirty years ago, but then everything of that sort has got worse and worse."

"I suppose it has," said the colonel.

"I remember when old Pawkins had as good a glass of port as I've got at home,—or nearly. They can't get it now, you know."

"I never drink port," said the colonel. "I seldom take anything after dinner, except a little negus."

His brother-in-law said nothing, but made a most eloquent grimace as he turned his face towards his soup-plate. Eames saw it and could hardly refrain from laughing. When, at half-past nine o'clock, the colonel retired from the room, the earl, as the door was closed, threw up his hands, and uttered the one word "negus!" Then Eames took heart of grace and had his laughter out.

The dinner was very dull, and before the colonel went to bed Johnny regretted that he had been induced to dine at Pawkins'. It might be a very fine thing to be asked to dinner with an earl, and John Eames had perhaps received at his office some little accession of dignity from the circumstances, of which he had been not unpleasantly aware; but, as he sat at the table, on which there were four or five apples and a plate of dried nuts, looking at the earl, as he endeavoured to keep his eyes open, and at the colonel, to whom it seemed absolutely a matter of indifference whether his companions were asleep or awake, he confessed to himself that the price he was paying was almost too dear. Mrs. Roper's tea-table was not pleasant to him, but even that would have been preferable to the black dinginess of Pawkins' mahogany, with the company of two tired old men, with whom he seemed to have no mutual subject of conversation. Once or twice he tried a word with the colonel, for the colonel sat with his eyes open looking at the fire. But he was answered with monosyllables,

and it was evident to him that the colonel did not wish to talk. To sit still, with his hands closed over each other on his lap, was work enough for Colonel Dale during his after-dinner hours.

But the earl knew what was going on. During that terrible conflict between him and his slumber, in which the drowsy god fairly vanquished him for some twenty minutes, his conscience was always accusing him of treating his guests badly. He was very angry with himself, and tried to arouse himself and talk. But his brother-in-law would not help him in his efforts; and even Eames was not bright in rendering him assistance. Then for twenty minutes he slept soundly, and at the end of that he woke himself with one of his own snorts. "By George!" he said, jumping up and standing on the rug, "we'll have some coffee;" and after that he did not sleep any more.

"Dale," said he, "won't you take some more wine?"

"Nothing more," said the colonel, still looking at the fire, and shaking his head very slowly.

"Come, Johnny, fill your glass." He had already got into the way of calling his young friend Johnny, having found that Mrs. Eames generally spoke of her son by that name.

"I have been filling my glass all the time," said Eames, taking the decanter again in his hand as he spoke.

"I'm glad you've found something to amuse you, for it has seemed to me that you and Dale haven't had much to say to each other. I've been listening all the time."

"You've been asleep," said the colonel.

"Then there's been some excuse for my holding my tongue," said the earl. "By-the-by, Dale, what do you think of that fellow Crosbie?"

Eames' ears were instantly on the alert, and the spirit of dulness vanished from him.

"Think of him?" said the colonel.

"He ought to have every bone in his skin broken," said the earl.

"So he ought," said Eames, getting up from his chair in his eagerness, and speaking in a tone somewhat louder than was perhaps becoming in the presence of his seniors. "So he ought, my lord. He is the most abominable rascal that ever I met in my life. I wish I was Lily Dale's brother." Then he sat down again, remembering that he was speaking in the presence of Lily's uncle, and of the father of Bernard Dale, who might be supposed to occupy the place of Lily's brother.

The colonel turned his head round, and looked at the young man with surprise. "I beg your pardon, sir," said Eames, "but I have known Mrs. Dale and your niece all my life."

"Oh, have you?" said the colonel. "Nevertheless it is, perhaps, as well not to make too free with a young lady's name. Not that I blame you in the least, Mr. Eames."

"I should think not," said the earl. "I honour him for his feeling. Johnny, my boy, if ever I am unfortunate enough to meet that man I

shall tell him my mind, and I believe you will do the same." On hearing this John Eames winked at the earl, and made a motion with his head towards the colonel, whose back was turned to him. And then the earl winked back at Eames.

"De Guest," said the colonel, "I think I'll go upstairs; I always have a little arrowroot in my own room."

"I'll ring the bell for a candle," said the host. Then the colonel went, and as the door was closed behind him, the earl raised his two hands and uttered that single word, "negus!" Whereupon Johnny burst out laughing, and coming round to the fire, sat himself down in the arm-chair which the colonel had left.

"I've no doubt it's all right," said the earl; "but I shouldn't like to drink negus myself, nor yet to have arrowroot up in my bedroom."

"I don't suppose there's any harm in it."

"Oh, dear, no; I wonder what Pawkins says about him. But I suppose they have them of all sorts in an hotel."

"The waiter didn't seem to think much of it when he brought it."

"No, no. If he'd asked for senna and salts, the waiter wouldn't have showed any surprise. By-the-by, you touched him up about that poor girl."

"Did I, my lord? I didn't mean it."

"You see he's Bernard Dale's father, and the question is, whether Bernard shouldn't punish the fellow for what he has done. Somebody ought to do it. It isn't right that he should escape. Somebody ought to let Mr. Crosbie know what a scoundrel he has made himself."

"I'd do it to-morrow, only I'm afraid——"

"No, no, no," said the earl; "you are not the right person at all. What have you got to do with it? You've merely known them as family friends, but that's not enough."

"No, I suppose not," said Eames, sadly.

"Perhaps it's best as it is," said the earl. "I don't know that any good would be got by knocking him over the head. And if we are to be Christians, I suppose we ought to be Christians."

"What sort of a Christian has he been?"

"That's true enough; and if I was Bernard, I should be very apt to forget my Bible lessons about meekness."

"Do you know, my lord, I should think it the most Christian thing in the world to pitch into him; I should, indeed. There are some things for which a man ought to be beaten black and blue."

"So that he shouldn't do them again?"

"Exactly. You might say it isn't Christian to hang a man."

"I'd always hang a murderer. It wasn't right to hang men for stealing sheep."

"Much better hang such a fellow as Crosbie," said Eames.

"Well, I believe so. If any fellow wanted now to curry favour with the young lady, what an opportunity he'd have."

Johnny remained silent for a moment or two before he answered,



"I'm not so sure of that," he said, mournfully, as though grieving at the thought that there was no chance of currying favour with Lily by thrashing her late lover.

"I don't pretend to know much about girls," said Lord De Guest; "but I should think it would be so. I should fancy that nothing would please her so much as hearing that he had caught it, and that all the world knew that he'd caught it." The earl had declared that he didn't know much about girls, and in so saying, he was no doubt right.

"If I thought so," said Eames, "I'd find him out to-morrow."

"Why so? what difference does it make to you?" Then there was another pause, during which Johnny looked very sheepish. "You don't mean to say that you're in love with Miss Lily Dale?"

"I don't know much about being in love with her," said Johnny, turning very red as he spoke. And then he made up his mind, in a wild sort of way, to tell all the truth to his friend. Pawkins' port wine may, perhaps, have had something to do with the resolution. "But I'd go through fire and water for her, my lord. I knew her years before he had ever seen her, and have loved her a great deal better than he will ever love any one. When I heard that she had accepted him, I had half a mind to cut my own throat,—or else his."

"Highty tighty," said the earl.

"It's very ridiculous, I know," said Johnny, "and of course she would never have accepted me."

"I don't see that at all."

"I haven't a shilling in the world."

"Girls don't care much for that."

"And then a clerk in the Income-tax Office! It's such a poor thing."

"The other fellow was only a clerk in another office."

The earl living down at Guestwick did not understand that the Income-tax Office in the city, and the General Committee Office at Whitehall, were as far apart as Dives and Lazarus, and separated by as impassable a gulf.

"Oh, yes," said Johnny; "but his office is another kind of thing, and then he was a swell himself."

"By George, I don't see it," said the earl.

"I don't wonder a bit at her accepting a fellow like that. I hated him the first moment I saw him; but that's no reason she should hate him. He had that sort of manner, you know. He was a swell, and girls like that kind of thing. I never felt angry with her, but I could have eaten him." As he spoke he looked as though he would have made some such attempt had Crosbie been present.

"Did you ever ask her to have you?" said the earl.

"No; how could I ask her, when I hadn't bread to give her?"

"And you never told her—that you were in love with her I mean, and all that kind of thing?"

"She knows it now," said Johnny; "I went to say good-by to her

the other day,—when I thought she was going to be married. I could not help telling her then."

"But it seems to me, my dear fellow, that you ought to be very much obliged to Crosbie;—that is to say, if you've a mind to——"

"I know what you mean, my lord. I am not a bit obliged to him. It's my belief that all this will about kill her. As to myself, if I thought she ~~never~~ ever have me——"

Then he was again silent, and the earl could see that the tears were in his eyes.

"I think I begin to understand it," said the earl, "and I'll give you a bit of advice. You come down and spend your Christmas with me at Guestwick."

"Oh, my lord!"

"Never mind my-lording me, but do as I tell you. Lady Julia sent you a message, though I forgot all about it till now. She wants to thank you herself for what you did in the field."

"That's all nonsense, my lord."

"Very well; you can tell her so. You may take my word for this, too,—my sister hates Crosbie quite as much as you do. I think she'd 'pitch into him,' as you call it, herself, if she knew how. You come down to Guestwick for the Christmas, and then go over to Allington and tell them all plainly what you mean."

"I couldn't say a word to her now."

"Say it to the squire, then. Go to him, and tell him what you mean,—holding your head up like a man. Don't talk to me about swells. The man who means honestly is the best swell I know. He's the only swell I recognize. Go to old Dale, and say you come from me,—from Guestwick Manor. Tell him that if he'll put a little stick under the pot to make it boil, I'll put a bigger one. He'll understand what that means."

"Oh, no, my lord."

"But I say, oh, yes;" and the earl, who was now standing on the rug before the fire, dug his hands deep down into his trousers' pockets. "I'm very fond of that girl, and would do much for her. You ask Lady Julia if I didn't say so to her before I ever knew of your casting a sheep's-eye that way. And I've a sneaking kindness for you too, Master Johnny. Lord bless you, I knew your father as well as I ever knew any man; and to tell the truth, I believe I helped to ruin him. He held land of me you know, and there can't be any doubt that he did ruin himself. He knew no more about a beast when he'd done, than—than—than that waiter. If he'd gone on to this day he wouldn't have been any wiser."

Johnny sat silent, with his eyes full of tears. What was he to say to his friend?

"You come down with me," continued the earl, "and you'll find we'll make it all straight. I daresay you're right about not speaking to the girl just at present. But tell everything to the uncle, and then to the mother. And, above all things, never think that you're not good enough

yourself. A man should never think that. My belief is that in life people will take you very much at your own reckoning. If you are made of dirt, like that fellow Croable, you'll be found out at last, no doubt. But then I don't think you are made of dirt."

"I hope not."

"And so do I. You can come down, I suppose, with me the day after to-morrow?"

"I'm afraid not. I have had all my leave."

"Shall I write to old Buffle, and ask it as a favour?"

"No," said Johnny; "I shouldn't like that. But I'll see to-morrow, and then I'll let you know. I can go down by the mail-train on Saturday, at any rate."

"That won't be comfortable. See and come with me if you can. Now, good-night, my dear fellow, and remember this,—when I say a thing I mean it. I think I may boast that I never yet went back from my word."

The earl as he spoke gave his left hand to his guest, and looking somewhat grandly up over the young man's head, he tapped his own breast thrice with his right hand. As he went through the little scene, John Eames felt that he was every inch an earl.

"I don't know what to say to you, my lord."

"Say nothing,—not a word more to me. But say to yourself that saint heart never won fair lady. Good-night, my dear boy, good-night. I dine out to-morrow, but you can call and let me know at about six."

Eames then left the room without another word, and walked out into the cold air of Jermyon Street. The moon was clear and bright, and the pavement in the shining light seemed to be as clean as a lady's hand. All the world was altered to him since he had entered Pawkins' Hotel. Was it then possible that Lily Dale might even yet become his wife? Could it be true that he, even now, was in a position to go boldly to the Squire of Allington, and tell him what were his views with reference to Lily? And how far would he be justified in taking the earl at his word? Some incredible amount of wealth would be required before he could marry Lily Dale. Two or three hundred pounds a year at the very least! The earl could not mean him to understand that any such sum as that would be made up with such an object! Nevertheless he resolved as he walked home to Burton Crescent that he would go down to Guestwick, and that he would obey the earl's behest. As regarded Lily herself he felt that nothing could be said to her for many a long day as yet.

"Oh, John, how late you are!" said Amelia, slipping out from the back parlour as he let himself in with his latch key.

"Yes, I am;—very late," said John, taking his candle, and passing her by on the stairs without another word.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## "THE TIME WILL COME."

"Do you hear that young Eames is staying at Guestwick Manor?"

As these were the first words which the squire spoke to Mrs. Dale as they walked together up to the Great House, after church, on Christmas Day, it was clear enough that the tidings of Johnny's visit, when told to him, had made some impression.

"At Guestwick Manor!" said Mrs. Dale. "Dear me! Do you hear that, Bell? There's promotion for Master Johnny!"

"Don't you remember, mamma," said Bell, "that he helped his lordship in his trouble with the bull?"

Lily, who remembered accurately all the passages of her last interview with John Eames, said nothing, but felt, in some sort, sore at the idea that he should be so near her at such a time. In some unconscious way she had liked him for coming to her and saying all that he did say. She valued him more highly after that scene than she did before. But now, she would feel herself injured and hurt if he ever made his way into her presence under circumstances as they existed.

"I should not have thought that Lord De Guest was the man to show so much gratitude for so slight a favour," said the squire. "However, I'm going to dine there to-morrow."

"To meet young Eames?" said Mrs. Dale.

"Yes,—especially to meet young Eames. At least, I've been very specially asked to come, and I've been told that he is to be there."

"And is Bernard going?"

"Indeed I'm not," said Bernard. "I shall come over and dine with you."

A half-formed idea flitted across Lily's mind, teaching her to imagine for a moment that she might possibly be concerned in this arrangement. But the thought vanished as quickly as it came, merely leaving some soreness behind it. There are certain maladies which make the whole body sore. The patient, let him be touched on any point,—let him even be nearly touched,—will roar with agony as though his whole body had been bruised. So is it also with maladies of the mind. Sorrows such as that of poor Lily's leave the heart sore at every point, and compel the sufferer to be ever in fear of new wounds. Lily bore her cross bravely and well; but not the less did it weigh heavily upon her at every turn because she had the strength to walk as though she did not bear it. Nothing happened to her, or in her presence, that did not in some way connect itself with her misery. Her uncle was going over to meet John Eames at Lord De Guest's. Of course the men there would talk about her, and all such talking was an injury to her.

The afternoon of that day did not pass away brightly. As long as

the servants were in the room the dinner went on much as other dinners. At such times a certain amount of hypocrisy must always be practised in closely domestic circles. At mixed dinner-parties people can talk before Richard and William the same words that they would use if Richard and William were not there. People so mixed do not talk together their inward home thoughts. But when close friends are together a little conscious reticence is practised till the door is tiled. At such a meeting as this that conscious reticence was of service, and created an effort which was salutary. When the door was tiled, and when the servants were gone, how could they be merry together? By what mirth should the beads be made to wag on that Christmas Day?

"My father has been up in town," said Bernard. "He was with Lord De Guest at Pawkins'."

"Why didn't you go and see him?" asked Mrs. Dale.

"Well, I don't know. He did not seem to wish it. I shall go down to Torquay in February. I must be up in London, you know, in a fortnight, for good." Then they were all silent again for a few minutes. If Bernard could have owned the truth he would have acknowledged that he had not gone up to London, because he did not yet know how to treat Crosbie when he should meet him. His thoughts on this matter threw some sort of shadow across poor Lily's mind, making her feel that her wound was again opened.

"I want him to give up his profession altogether," said the squire, speaking firmly and slowly. "It would be better, I think, for both of us that he should do so."

"Would it be wise at his time of life," said Mrs. Dale, "and when he has been doing so well?"

"I think it would be wise. If he were my son it would be thought better that he should live here upon the property, among the people who are to become his tenants, than remain up in London, or perhaps be sent to India. He has one profession as the heir of this place, and that, I think, should be enough."

"I should have but an idle life of it down here," said Bernard.

"That would be your own fault. But if you did as I would have you, your life would not be idle." In this he was alluding to Bernard's proposed marriage, but as to that nothing further could be said in Bell's presence. Bell understood it all, and sat quite silent, with demure countenance;—perhaps even with something of sternness in her face.

"But the fact is," said Mrs. Dale, speaking in a low tone, and having well considered what she was about to say, "that Bernard is not exactly the same as your son."

"Why not?" said the squire. "I have even offered to settle the property on him if he will leave the service."

"You do not owe him so much as you would owe your son; and, therefore, he does not owe you as much as he would owe his father."

"If you mean that I cannot constrain him, I know that well enough."

As regards money I have offered to do for him quite as much as any father would feel called upon to do for an only son."

"I hope you don't think me ungrateful," said Bernard.

"No, I do not; but I think you unmindful. I have nothing more to say about it, however;—not about that. If you should marry——" And then he stopped himself, feeling that he could not go on in Bell's presence.

"If he should marry," said Mrs. Dale, "it may well be that his wife would like a house of her own."

"Wouldn't she have this house?" said the squire, angrily. "Isn't it big enough? I only want one room for myself, and I'd give up that if it were necessary."

"That's nonsense," said Mrs. Dale.

"It isn't nonsense," said the squire.

"You'll be squire of Allington for the next twenty years," said Mrs. Dale. "And as long as you are the squire, you'll be master of this house; at least, I hope so. I don't approve of monarchs abdicating in favour of young people."

"I don't think uncle Christopher would look at all well like Charles the Fifth," said Lily.

"I would always keep a cell for you, my darling, if I did," said the squire, regarding her with that painful, special tenderness. Lily, who was sitting next to Mrs. Dale, put her hand out secretly and got hold of her mother's, thereby indicating that she did not intend to occupy the cell offered to her by her uncle; or to look to him as the companion of her monastic seclusion. After that there was nothing more then said as to Bernard's prospects.

"Mrs. Hearn is dining at the vicarage, I suppose?" asked the squire.

"Yes; she went in after church," said Bell. "I saw her go with Mrs. Boyce."

"She told me she never would dine with them again after dark in winter," said Mrs. Dale. "The last time she was there, the boy let the lamp blow out as she was going home, and she lost her way. The truth was, she was angry because Mr. Boyce didn't go with her."

"She's always angry," said the squire. "She hardly speaks to me now. When she paid her rent the other day to Jolliffe, she said she hoped it would do me much good; as though she thought me a brute for taking it."

"So she does," said Bernard.

"She's very old, you know," said Bell.

"I'd give him the house for nothing, if I were you, uncle," said Lily.

"No, my dear; if you were me you would not. I should be very wrong to do so. Why should Mrs. Hearn have her house for nothing, any more than her meat or her clothes? It would be much more reasonable were I to give her so much money into her hand yearly; but it would be wrong in me to do so, seeing that she is not an object of charity;—and it would be wrong in her to take it."

"And she wouldn't take it," said Mrs. Dale.

"I don't think she would. But if she did, I'm sure she would grumble because it wasn't double the amount. And if Mr. Boyce had gone home with her, she would have grumbled because he walked too fast."

"She is very old," said Bell, again.

"But, nevertheless, she ought to know better than to speak disparagingly of me to my servants. She should have more respect for herself." And the squire showed by the tone of his voice that he thought very much about it.

It was very long and very dull that Christmas evening, making Bernard feel strongly that he would be very foolish to give up his profession, and tie himself down to a life at Allington. Women are more accustomed than men to long, dull, unemployed hours; and, therefore, Mrs. Dale and her daughters bore the tedium courageously. While he yawned, stretched himself, and went in and out of the room, they sat demurely, listening as the squire laid down the law on small matters, and contradicting him occasionally when the spirit of either of them prompted her specially to do so. "Of course you know much better than I do," he would say. "Not at all," Mrs. Dale would answer. "I don't pretend to know anything about it. But——" So the evening wore itself away; and when the squire was left alone at half-past nine, he did not feel that the day had passed badly with him. That was his style of life, and he expected no more from it than he got. He did not look to find things very pleasant, and, if not happy, he was, at any rate, contented.

"Only think of Johnny Eames being at Guestwick Manor!" said Bell, as they were going home.

"I don't see why he shouldn't be there," said Lily. "I would rather it should be he than I, because Lady Julia is so grumpy."

"But asking your uncle Christopher especially to meet him!" said Mrs. Dale. "There must be some reason for it." Then Lily felt the soreness come upon her again, and spoke no further upon the subject.

We all know that there was a special reason, and that Lily's soreness was not false in its mysterious forebodings. Eames, on the evening after his dinner at Pawkins', had seen the earl, and explained to him that he could not leave town till the Saturday evening; but that he could remain over the Tuesday. He must be at his office by twelve on Wednesday, and could manage to do that by an early train from Guestwick.

"Very well, Johnny," said the earl, talking to his young friend with the bedroom candle in his hand, as he was going up to dress. "Then I'll tell you what; I've been thinking of it. I'll ask Dale to come over to dinner on Tuesday; and if he'll come, I'll explain the whole matter to him myself. He's a man of business, and he'll understand. If he won't come, why then you must go over to Allington, and find him, if you can, on the Tuesday morning; or I'll go to him myself, which will be better. You mustn't keep me now, as I am ever so much too late."

Eames did not attempt to keep him, but went away feeling that this

• whole matter was being arranged for him in a very wonderful way. And when he got to Allington he found that the squire had accepted the earl's invitation. Then he declared to himself that there was no longer any possibility of retraction for him. Of course he did not wish to retract. The one great longing of his life was to call Lily Dale his own. But he felt afraid of the squire,—that the squire would despise him and snub him, and that the earl would perceive that he had made a mistake when he saw how his client was scorned and snubbed. It was arranged that the earl was to take the squire into his own room for a few minutes before dinner, and Johnny felt that he would be hardly able to stand his ground in the drawing-room when the two old men should make their appearance together.

He got on very well with Lady Julia, who gave herself no airs, and made herself very civil. Her brother had told her the whole story, and she felt as anxious as he did to provide Lily with another husband in place of that horrible man Crosbie. "She has been very fortunate in her escape," she said to her brother; "very fortunate." The earl agreed with this, saying that in his opinion his own favourite Johnny would make much the nicer lover of the two. But Lady Julia had her doubts as to Lily's acquiescence. "But, Theodore, he must not speak to Miss Lilian Dale herself about it yet a while."

"No," said the earl; "not for a month or so."

"He will have a better chance if he can remain silent for six months," said Lady Julia.

"Bless my soul! somebody else will have picked her up before that," said the earl.

In answer to this Lady Julia merely shook her head.

Johnny went over to his mother on Christmas day after church, and was received by her and by his sister with great honour. And she gave him many injunctions as to his behaviour at the earl's table, even descending to small details about his boots and linen. But Johnny had already begun to feel at the Manor that, after all, people are not so very different in their ways of life as they are supposed to be. Lady Julia's manners were certainly not quite those of Mrs. Roper; but she made the tea very much in the way in which it was made at Burton Crescent, and Eames found that he could eat his egg, at any rate on the second morning, without any tremor in his hand, in spite of the coronet on the silver egg-cup. He did feel himself to be rather out of his place in the Manor pew on the Sunday, conceiving that all the congregation was looking at him; but he got over this on Christmas Day, and sat quite comfortably in his soft corner during the sermon, almost going to sleep. And when he walked with the earl after church to the gate over which the noble peer had climbed in his agony, and inspected the hedge through which he had thrown himself, he was quite at home with his little jokes, bantering his august companion as to the mode of his somersault. But be it always remembered that there are two modes in which a young man may be free



and easy with his elder and superior,—the mode pleasant and the mode offensive. Had it been in Johnny's nature to try the latter, the earl's back would soon have been up at once, and the play would have been over. But it was not in Johnny's nature to do so, and therefore it was that the earl liked him.

At last came the hour of dinner on Tuesday, or at least the hour at which the squire had been asked to show himself at the Manor House. Eames, as by agreement with his patron, did not come down so as to show himself till after the interview. Lady Julia, who had been present at their discussions, had agreed to receive the squire; and then a servant was to ask him to step into the earl's own room. It was pretty to see the way in which the three conspired together, planning and plotting with an eagerness that was beautifully green and fresh.

"He can be as cross as an old stick when he likes it," said the earl, speaking of the squire; "and we must take care not to rub him the wrong way."

"I shan't know what to say to him when I come down," said Johnny.

"Just shake hands with him and don't say anything," said Lady Julia.

"I'll give him some port wine that ought to soften his heart," said the earl, "and then we'll see how he is in the evening."

Eames heard the wheels of the squire's little open carriage and trembled. The squire, unconscious of all schemes, soon found himself with Lady Julia, and within two minutes of his entrance was walked off to the earl's private room. "Certainly," he said, "certainly;" and followed the man-servant. The earl, as he entered, was standing in the middle of the room, and his round rosy face was a picture of good-humour.

"I'm very glad you've come, Dale," said he. "I've something I want to say to you."

Mr. Dale, who neither in heart nor in manner was so light a man as the earl, took the proffered hand of his host, and bowed his head alightly, signifying that he was willing to listen to anything.

"I think I told you," continued the earl, "that young John Eames is down here; but he goes back to-morrow, as they can't spare him at his office. He's a very good fellow,—as far as I am able to judge, an uncommonly good young man. I've taken a great fancy to him myself."

In answer to this Mr. Dale did not say much. He sat down, and in some general terms expressed his good-will towards all the Eames family.

"As you know, Dale, I'm a very bad hand at talking, and therefore I won't beat about the bush in what I've got to say at present. Of course we've all heard of that scoundrel Crosbie, and the way he has treated your niece Lillian."

"He is a scoundrel,—an unmixed scoundrel. But the less we say about that the better. It is ill mentioning a girl's name in such a matter as that."

"But, my dear Dale, I must mention it at the present moment. Dear young child, I would do anything to comfort her! And I hope that some-

thing may be done to comfort her. Do you know that that young man was in love with her long before Crocabe ever saw her?"

"What;—John Eames!"

"Yes, John Eames. And I wish heartily for his sake that he had won her regard before she had met that rascal whom you had to stay down at your house."

"A man cannot help these things, De Guest," said the squire.

"No, no, no! There are such men about the world, and it is impossible to know them at a glance. He was my nephew's friend, and I am not going to say that my nephew was in fault. But I wish,—I only say that I wish,—she had first known what are this young man's feelings towards her."

"But she might not have thought of him as you do."

"He is an uncommonly good-looking young fellow; straight made, broad in the chest, with a good, honest eye, and a young man's proper courage. He has never been taught to give himself airs like a dancing monkey; but I think he's all the better for that."

"But it's too late, now, De Guest."

"No, no; that's just where it is. It mustn't be too late! That child is not to lose her whole life because a villain has played her false. Of course she'll suffer. Just at present it wouldn't do, I suppose, to talk to her about a new sweetheart. But, Dale, the time will come; the time will come;—the time always does come."

"It has never come to you and me," said the squire, with the slightest possible smile on his dry cheeks. The story of their lives had been so far the same; each had loved, and each had been disappointed, and then each had remained single through life.

"Yes, it has," said the earl, with no slight touch of feeling and even of romance in what he said. "We have retriected our beams in our own ways, and our lives have not been desolate. But for her,—you and her mother will look forward to see her married some day."

"I have not thought about it."

"But I want you to think about it. I want to interest you in this fellow's favour; and in doing so, I mean to be very open with you. I suppose you'll give her something?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said the squire, almost offended at an inquiry of such a nature.

"Well, then, whether you do or not, I'll give him something," said the earl. "I shouldn't have ventured to meddle in the matter had I not intended to put myself in such a position with reference to him as would justify me in asking the question." And the peer as he spoke drew himself up to his full height. "If such a match can be made, it shall not be a bad marriage for your niece in a pecuniary point of view. I shall have pleasure in giving to him; but I shall have more pleasure if she can share what I give."

"She ought to be very much obliged to you," said the squire.

"I think she would be if she knew young Eames. I hope the day may come when she will be so. I hope that you and I may see them happy together, and that you too may thank me for having assisted in making them so. Shall we go in to Lady Julia now?" The earl had felt that he had not quite succeeded; that his offer had been accepted somewhat coldly, and had not much hope that further good could be done on that day, even with the help of his best port-wine.

"Half a moment," said the squire. "There are matters as to which I never find myself able to speak quickly, and this certainly seems to be one of them. If you will allow me I will think over what you have said and then see you again."

"Certainly, certainly."

"But for your own part in the matter, for your great generosity and kind heart, I beg to offer you my warmest thanks." Then the squire bowed low, and preceded the earl out of the room.

Lord De Guest still felt that he had not succeeded. We may probably say, looking at the squire's character and peculiarities, that no marked success was probable at the first opening out of such a subject. He had said of himself that he was never able to speak quickly in matters of moment, but he would more correctly have described his own character had he declared that he could not think of them quickly. As it was, the earl was disappointed; but had he been able to read the squire's mind, his disappointment would have been less strong. Mr. Dale knew well enough that he was being treated well, and that the effort being made was intended with kindness to those belonging to him, but it was not in his nature to be demonstrative and quick at expressions of gratitude. So he entered the drawing-room with a cold, placid face, leading Eames, and Lady Julia also, to suppose that no good had been done.

"How do you do, sir?" said Johnny, walking up to him in a wild sort of manner,—going through a premeditated lesson, but doing it without any presence of mind.

"How do you do, Eames?" said the squire, speaking with a very cold voice. And then there was nothing further said till the dinner was announced.

"Dale, I know you drink port," said the earl when Lady Julia left them. "If you say you don't like that, I shall say you know nothing about it."

"Ah! that's the '20," said the squire, tasting it.

"I should rather think it is," said the earl. "I was lucky enough to get it early, and it hasn't been moved for thirty years. I like to give it to a man who knows it, as you do, at the first glance. Now there's my friend Johnny there; it's thrown away upon him."

"No, my lord, it is not. I think it's uncommonly nice."

"Uncommonly nice! So is champagne, or ginger-beer, or lollipops,—for those who like them. Do you mean to tell me you can taste wine with half a pickled orange in your mouth?"

"It'll come to him soon enough," said the squire.

"Twenty port won't come to him when he is as old as we are," said the earl, forgetting that by that time sixty port will be as wonderful to the then living seniors of the age as was his own pet vintage to him.

The good wine did in some sort soften the squire; but, as a matter of course, nothing further was said as to the new matrimonial scheme. The earl did observe, however, that Mr. Dale was civil, and even kind, to his own young friend, asking a question here and there as to his life in London, and saying something about the work at the Income-tax Office.

"It is hard work," said Eames. "If you're under the line, they make a great row about it, send for you, and look at you as though you'd been robbing the bank; but they think nothing of keeping you till five."

"But how long do you have for lunch and reading the papers?" said the earl.

"Not ten minutes. We take a paper among twenty of us for half the day. That's exactly nine minutes to each; and as for lunch, we only have a biscuit dipped in ink."

"Dipped in ink!" said the squire.

"It comes to that, for you have to be writing while you munch it."

"I hear all about you," said the earl; "Sir Raffle Buffle is an old crony of mine."

"I don't suppose he ever heard my name as yet," said Johnny. "But do you really know him well, Lord De Guest?"

"Haven't seen him these thirty years; but I did know him."

"We call him old Huffle Scuffle."

"Huffle Scuffle! Ha, ha, ha! He always was Huffle Scuffle; a noisy, pretentious, empty-headed fellow. But I oughtn't to say so before you, young man. Come, we'll go into the drawing-room."

"And what did he say?" asked Lady Julia, as soon as the squire was gone. There was no attempt at concealment, and the question was asked in Johnny's presence.

"Well, he did not say much. And coming from him, that ought to be taken as a good sign. He is to think of it, and let me see him again. You hold your head up, Johnny, and remember that you shan't want a friend on your side. Faint heart never won fair lady."

At seven o'clock on the following morning Eames started on his return journey, and was at his desk at twelve o'clock,—as per agreement with his taskmaster at the Income-tax Office.

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## Commonplaces on England.

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THE periodical writers, especially the writers in newspapers, who assume to themselves the right of speaking in the name of the nation at large, are in the habit of constantly using the word "we," not only in the common sense of "I who write this," but in the special and peculiar sense of "We, the English people." The broad, general principle with which a leading article generally sets out to run its race is constantly thrown into the form of some assertion of this sort. "We are not a speculative people," "We are a patient people," "We can make anything in the world except a handsome public building," &c. A complete collection of the sentiments of this kind uttered in any given year in any one popular paper, would supply a highly curious portrait of the nation—not as others see it, but as it is seen by writers who embody in their own persons a full dose of the national characteristics, and who intensify by describing them. Some curious and important consequences follow from the habit of propagating in all directions notions on such an important subject as the national character adapted to the exigencies of periodical literature, the first and most pressing of which is to produce impressions as vivid as they are transient.

The first observation which arises on it is, that the view of the English character which it produces is tinged throughout by humorous self-depreciation. Of the commonplaces which abound in newspapers about English national character few are directly and in terms boastful, or even complimentary. The commonest expressions on the subject are meant to justify measures or institutions by a half-contemptuous admission of the absence from the English character of some lofty attribute which would have remedied the defects complained of; but this is always attended with an insinuation, more or less express, that the attribute in question is not really lofty or magnificent, though it is not worth our while to dispute its claims. Suppose, for instance—and it is a very common case—that the object in view is to pooh-pooh and set on one side some clergyman who has pushed his speculations beyond what are usually viewed as the limits of orthodoxy. The commonest, and one of the most effective, ways of doing so is to say in substance—"This may be all very well, but we are not a speculative nation; carry your doubts and inquiries elsewhere." This is in terms an admission that the English people has renounced the highest of its intellectual functions, and that it is fit only for those lower exertions of intelligence by which men provide for their daily wants. The writer really does intend to hint something of the kind, though he probably does not precisely know himself how far he is prepared to go; but he means a good deal more

besides. He means to insinuate that the speculations on which the clerical heretic is disposed to set so high a price are, in truth, all nonsense, and that the British public, with its contemptuous admission of ignorance, is wiser than its self-satisfied instructor, with his presumptuous claims to superior knowledge. For once in a way, such an expression may pass muster well enough. The proper answer to a person otherwise not worth answering may frequently be—"No doubt you are much wiser than I, but this is my opinion, and I shall act on it." In time, however, such admissions, made merely for controversial purposes, become established as recognized commonplaces. For some temporary purpose people are told that they are this, that, and the other, but at last they come to think that the fact is really so. An opinion grows up that the English nation is not fitted for speculation—that it has little logical power—that it cares little for "theory," meaning thereby principle in any form; and these opinions, put forward with humorous levity, and persisted in more from a good-natured contempt of those against whom they are levelled than for any other purpose, have often most serious practical consequences. For instance, it was for many years a fashion to say that we are not a military people, that the English nation are utterly indifferent to military glory, and that we had finally betaken ourselves to the acquisition of wealth as the only occupation worthy of a serious people. Some of our readers may happen to remember a caricature of a well-known picture which appeared in *Punch*, and which embodied this sentiment in a very pointed manner. The title of the caricature was "The Choice of Hercules." John Bull, as Hercules, was between Mr. Cobden and the Duke of Wellington. He willingly followed the prophet of free-trade, who was pushing him along towards peace and plenty, and looking back with a good humoured grin at the hero, who, with a stern countenance, was pointing upwards. It has now become almost trivial to say how completely false this impression was, and how important were the consequences of the mistake. It is far from improbable that many lives and much money might have been saved if we had been a little less ready to admit that we had ceased to care for anything beyond present ease and comfort, and if we had insisted a little more on our retention of the properties which have made England a great nation. It is always best to speak the exact truth about both men and nations, and it is unworthy to allow false conceptions of the character of the country to grow up for no better reason than that by doing so we party for the moment some troublesome question, and save ourselves the pains of finding the true answer. Let us consider a few of these commonplaces, and their relation to the real state of the case.

One considerable group of these refers to the intellectual character of the country. Everywhere we meet with the assertion, "We are not a speculative people;" and this dogma is worked in such a way as to furnish an answer to almost every new opinion advanced upon any subject which the general body of the public are not at the moment

inclined to discuss. Theological discussion, within certain limits, is the very breath of the nostrils of a considerable proportion of the public. The standing duels between different sects of Christians, and different shades of opinion—between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant, between the High and the Low Churchman, between the Church of England and Dissenters—are never interfered with; they go on perpetually in their own spheres, and according to their own rules, without exciting the faintest censure, generally speaking without even attracting attention. If, however, certain limits, ill-defined, though generally tacitly understood, are transgressed, if the principles usually taken for granted on both sides are brought into serious question—especially if this is done in such a manner as to attract any considerable amount of public attention and interest—all the more influential organs of public opinion give utterance, from time to time, to a prolonged and scandalized hush. The disputants are told that they are stretching their tether too far. “We are not a speculative people.” We—the English people—are not going to have real discussions upon these subjects. Our principles are fixed, our minds made up, and let no man who wishes for anything that others can give him presume to try to unsettle them. In politics the hush is neither so loud nor so long, for the custom of the country permits a much greater amount of real liberty of thought and discussion upon these than upon most other subjects. Here, however, as in the theological department, there is a limit. Let people try to test almost any institution by anything that wears the appearance of an abstract principle, and they will be confronted with the same doctrine in a slightly different shape. Probably they may not be told that “we are not a speculative people,” but they will most assuredly learn, if they did not know it before, that we are a practical people, that the English nation is not to be deluded by theory, that compromise is the very soul of all our institutions, and that unless a man is prepared to suggest some compromise which the two contending parties are likely to accept, he had better hold his peace altogether. Some years ago a discussion arose about Sunday trains or Sunday shopping. A very popular and influential writer, having occasion to handle the subject, observed in the usual oracular way, “The English Sunday is a compromise,” and he went on to point out that it shared that characteristic with the British constitution and many other standing subjects of veneration. Wherever any arrangement whatever has to be regulated on anything approaching to a principle, observations of the same sort are always put forward. Sometimes we are told that we are not a logical people; on other occasions we discover that there is no reason why we should be consistent. In one way or other we are continually boasting, with a strong spice of the pride that apes humility, of a strange disproportion which is supposed to exist between the strength of our reason and that of our prejudices. Is it in fact true that such a disproportion exists? Does the English nation as a rule disregard the truth? Is it incapable of being convinced by an impartial inquiry into truth that its preconceived

opinions are not true in fact, and that its institutions or articles of belief ought to be altered? If these things are not so, it would surely be worth while to give up the habit of asserting that they are, and of thus misleading those who have to act with reference to their conceptions of English character into errors which may have very serious practical results.

\* A person disposed to inquire seriously whether or not the English are a speculative people would, in the first place, try to ascertain what he meant by the word, and by other words of the same sort. Upon inquiry he would find it impossible to assign to them any other meaning than that of thoughtful, fond of inquiry, and the like. A man speculates who is in the habit of comparing the world outside of him with the principles on which he usually acts, and who judges of the truth of his principles by considering how far they agree with the facts to which they are applied. He is in short a man who loves the truth, who wishes to find out what it is, and who, when he has found it out, acts upon his discovery. Does the English character answer to this description? The whole history of the nation answers, Yes, in the most emphatic manner. Perhaps there is not in all the rest of the world any people which has on all occasions adhered so vigorously to that of the truth of which it has once been convinced, or has allowed its policy to be influenced so deeply and permanently by abstract reasoning. It might have been expected that this would be so, for no nation has in all stages of its history been so rich in men eminent for original thought and abstract inquiry. No doubt it is quite true that English people have always been singularly slow in accepting proof of theories, and that when they have accepted them as true they have applied them to the infinitely complicated masses of fact with which governments and legislatures have to deal with singular deliberation, and an unparalleled quantity of discussion. This, however, shows neither distrust of the processes of reason, nor scepticism as to the possibility of discovering truth. It shows nothing more than consciousness of the true nature of the undertaking in which every one must of necessity be engaged who wishes to investigate the truth and apply it to any useful purpose. To view truth as something complex and hard to be learnt, to distrust first impressions, to work towards it gradually, and to apply with caution the results ultimately obtained, is the part of sincere believers in truth, not of those who doubt the possibility of reaching it. The history of England shows decisively which path it has followed as a whole. Twice in the last three centuries, at the time of the Reformation, and at the time of the French Revolution, great dams opposed to the general current of human thoughts and passions have given way after a long and silent collection of the waters behind them. On each occasion the English nation behaved in precisely the same way. They considered the matter in hand with a ponderous, dignified calmness, which opposed to the various conflicting impulses a sufficient *vis inertia* to allow each to act with its full force. Neither the Calvinists nor the Catholics, neither the democrats nor the legitimists, ever had their way in this country; but why not? Because



the public thought that a compromise, something between the two, was the safest course? Certainly not. Because they were convinced that neither party had solved the whole problem; that neither was entirely in the right; that the truth was something far deeper and wider than either of the contending parties supposed it to be, and that it has to be discovered, not by taking up with showy maxims which claim to be true because they were coherent, but by laborious methods of detail, by making things rather better which were clearly bad, and by continually seeking and searching into them to see why they were bad, and what were the principles on which they ought to be based.

Any one who will attentively consider the history of England, and especially that part of it which is passing before his own eyes, will perceive that the alleged dislike of Englishmen to theory and speculation is, in reality, a dislike for falsehood and rashness. Once give proof of the falsehood of any proposition, on which an English belief or institution is founded, and the days of that belief or institution are numbered. People go on denouncing, despising, and attacking it with the callous tenacity which belongs to so many English proceedings. For a long time the wall stands fair and square before the battering-ram, but the blows continue to fall till, after an incalculable quantity of talk and trouble, the obstacle is at last removed, and truth is victorious. What looks like compromise and indecision is, in reality, only an effort of the obstinacy and stubbornness of the controversialists. Each fights for every rag of his opinion till the side on which truth lies has gained a victory so decisive as to make any future fighting impossible. When the very last grain of wheat has, by unspeakable efforts, been sifted out of the chaff, the matter is at an end, and not before. Even when the victory is finally won and the principle established, a sort of shelter is provided—partly by generosity, partly in order to save trouble for the beaten party. Enough of their theory is left them to swear by. Their opponents are usually disinclined, if their own principles are established in fact, to take much trouble about humiliating the other side, by stickling for a categorical legal recognition of their own triumph.

An excellent illustration of this mode of proceeding is afforded by the whole history of the establishment in this country of the principle that men are free to hold any religious opinions they please. To say exactly how the law of the land stands on this point would require a great deal of half-antiquarian, half-legal knowledge. For instance, the law as to religious liberty is something of this kind. The Church of England has jurisdiction over all Englishmen, and, amongst other things, compels them to hold the Christian faith according to its own principles, and it may punish, as heretics, all those who deny it, or any part of it, to be true. It may not, however, declare anything whatever to be heresy except what is laid down as such in the Thirty-nine Articles, &c., until the Queen, with the consent of Parliament, shall have declared what is to be so considered, which her Majesty and her predecessors have taken exceed-

ingly good care not to do. Neither can the Church punish as heretics, by the help of the lay power, anybody who does deny the doctrines in the Thirty-nine Articles; nor can it punish any one by spiritual censures in such a way as to hurt him, unless he is a beneficed clergyman; and though there are all sorts of temporal penalties denounced against people who do not believe or worship aright, yet they are all prevented from acting by one contrivance or another. In other words, any one but a beneficed clergyman is free to think what he pleases about religion and to worship as he likes.

It is easy to call a system like this, composed of elaborate rules, blockaded by exceptions co-extensive with themselves, a compromise. It is, in fact, no compromise at all; but the monument of the triumph of a great principle, established, step by step, in the face of fierce and even desperate opposition, but established so firmly that, after being once established, it never required further discussion or inquiry, but became a sort of axiom in politics. "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum*," is the motto of all English reforms. When the battle is once won, it is won once for all. Of course, while the process of struggle and inquiry is still going on, compromises may and do exist, but they are mere truces, temporary expedients which are never conclusive. An English controversy never really ends until one side has finally knocked the other down, and stamped on it, with more or less emphasis, according to the way in which the question has been discussed.

It is not difficult to compare the probabilities of this theory with commonplaces couched in language which can have no other real meaning than that the English people are constitutionally indifferent to truth, that they are incapable of understanding what a true theory is, and that they look out only for convenient compromises between conflicting theories. When steadily looked at, this theory may be seen to be not merely untrue, but unmeaning. It proceeds, in the first place, upon an indistinct and really unintelligible notion that theories have some existence of their own in the air apart from the minds which entertain them, and that the conflict of theories means something different from controversies between the men who hold those theories. It is absurd to suppose that there is a great difference between the people who are supposed to adopt the compromises and those who hold the theories between which the compromises are supposed to be made. The fact is that the compromises are made by the people who hold the opposite theories; but they make them as an instrument of war, not as a surrender of their own views. The compromise represents no one's opinions, nor does its existence show that those who made it had not or did not believe them. In fact, it proves the reverse. The real inference from the complicated character of English institutions, and the peculiar and apparently tortuous character of English policy, is not that Englishmen are deficient in logical power or in belief in their own theories, but that a great variety of opinion exists against them, and that the opinions of very different kinds of people have had each in their turn

a considerable effect on the actual course of events. The notion that Englishmen are not speculative, because the practical results of their speculations are not simple, is just like the notion that the propulsive force of gunpowder and the force of gravitation have no assignable direction, because it is a very difficult thing to trace accurately the course of a projectile.

Apart from this general view of the matter, it is surely impossible to reconcile the theory which denies speculative power to the English nation with the fact that in all practical questions our countrymen are proverbially decisive and consistent. No one has ever carried depreciation of the intellect of this country so far as to say that English people are distinguished in the management of business by not knowing their own minds, and by being unable to carry out consistently any course of conduct on which they have decided. Yet this ought to be the case, if we were not a speculative people. No human undertaking whatever, from mending a pen or making a pair of shoes, up to founding an empire, can be conducted without some theory, without some thought on the subject. No one can act at all unless he has some object in view, and some notion of the nature of the means by which it is to be effected; and the only real difference between the speculation which leads to immediate and that which leads to distant results, is a difference in degree. Great and well-deserved admiration has of late years been bestowed upon the wonderful engineering feats, of which the last two generations have witnessed so many. Most of them rested on speculations and theories of the most recondite and elaborate kind. Locomotive engines and their applications to railroads were theories long before they were translated into facts. So were the Atlantic steamers and the tubular bridges of which we have all heard so much. Can it be true that a nation which has taken the lead in such works as these should really be deficient in power of thought—in other words, in speculation?

The disposition to run down or to deny altogether the intellectual power of Englishmen is only one of the many forms assumed by the awkward irony under consideration. A very common form of it is the absurd habit of putting forward on every occasion the lowest motives only as those on which our policy is based. Throughout a great part of continental Europe there is a fixed belief that the policy, and especially the foreign policy, of this country is sordid, selfish, and cunning, in the highest possible degree. Every step that we ever take is supposed by the French to be some diabolical device for extending our commerce, and by the Americans to be some hateful plot on the part of the aristocracy against their greatness and glory. The Macchiavellian theory of John Bull is, perhaps, not quite so popular now as it was some years ago, but he is still looked upon as a terribly hard-hearted old miscreant, whose principal aim in life is to force his hardware down people's throats, and to clothe them by main strength in his cotton fabrics. To a considerable section of the European world we are still known as the

race perfidious beyond all others, and successful principally by reason of our perfidy. In M. Hugo's great repertory of fine phrases, England figures as "le mauvais riche;" and the standing topic of continental—especially of Roman Catholic—critics upon us is, that with all our wealth and power, we are a hard-hearted, selfish, wicked set, whose glory is the luxury of the few, based on the wretchedness of the many. It is one of the most curious of common things that this estimate of the character of England should prevail throughout a great part of the world, and that the nation so stigmatized by its fellows should rather enjoy the process than not. The most indignant eloquence, the most solemnly pronounced censure from any foreign country, is copied into English newspapers, and produces nothing but a smile half amused and perhaps a quarter contemptuous. We do not care enough about the opinion of others to take the trouble to despise it thoroughly and heartily, or to ask ourselves at all why we despise it. If a Frenchman reads attacks upon France, he gets furiously angry; he wants to defend himself; he feels as an Englishman would feel if he were made the object of public accusation in his own newspaper. He cares intensely for the public opinion of Europe, and has no sort of wish to conceal the fact. We treat all such things consistently, on the principle that such attacks amuse our critics, and cannot by any possibility hurt us. This sublime and imperturbable pride is very impressive, and in its way a very good thing. In these days, the power of public opinion in all its forms is so great, that much is to be said in favour of any one who appeals habitually to any other standard of right and wrong, and a nation utterly unmoved by the praise or blame of others, so long as it is satisfied with its own proceedings, sets an excellent example to the world. It may, however, be easily debased into something which cannot in any way be made the subject of praise. To be utterly unmoved by the reproaches of others, and perfectly indifferent to their approbation, is an excellent thing. To adopt their reproaches as if they were true, or to act in such a way as to allow them to suppose that their reproaches are true, is a very different thing; and there is a sort of fashion amongst us of speaking and writing in such a way as to countenance these conclusions. The French, for instance, profess in the loudest terms all manner of splendid sentiments. We listen with external composure, but with an internal conviction that it is all swag and nonsense. They assert that we are a purely mercenary people, indifferent to anything but wealth. Without exactly saying yes, we consent to discuss matters upon that understanding, retaining our own tacit conviction that the French estimate of us is as absurd as their estimate of themselves, but that it is not worth our while to explain to them what they cannot be expected to understand. After indulging for a time in this strange habit, in which a half-lumourous contempt for the vanity of others produces the appearance of want of respect for ourselves, we are surprised to find that the rest of the world have been taking us at our own estimate, that they really believe us to be the selfish and vulgar mercenaries that we have allowed

them to suppose us to consider ourselves to be, and that the proposition that England is perfidious and hypocritical has come to be an established part of the political creed of continental Europe.

In fact, few nations are less open to charges of this kind. Whatever excuse there may once have been for such a view of English policy, there has been hardly any truth in it for a great length of time. On the contrary, it is probable that no nation in Europe is, on the whole, so much moved by appeals to a sense of honour and duty. Views of this kind, right or wrong, enlightened or not, have decided all the most important political questions that have arisen for many years past. To take a broad instance which at this moment is passing before our eyes, let any one compare the weight which, in popular estimation, attaches to arguments on the American question drawn from anything which has any plausible grounds to be called a moral principle, with arguments professedly based upon interest. The one would command universal attention; no one would venture even to put forward the other. The two points by which the sympathies of the nation as well as their conduct, are determined are the bearing of the struggle upon the prospects of slavery and its bearing on liberty. Intimately as the whole matter is connected with the interests of every part of the community especially with those of the very poor, the theoretical way of looking at the matter is universal, and may be said almost to exclude every other. What interests the nation at large is not the question of cotton or of tariffs, or of the degree of sympathy and alliance which we might expect from either party in case of its success, but the question of slavery, the question of democracy, the question of the right to secede. It is probably true that some sections of the public are animated by a jealousy of the greatness of the old Union, and that others feel satisfaction in the notion that what has occurred is a discredit to democratic institutions, but though these feelings may not be lofty or even justifiable, they are genuine feelings. They are not mere calculations. The men who are glad to see America fail (as they think) do really dislike and disapprove of the principles on which American institutions are based. They would not be equally pleased, for instance, to hear of intestine divisions in Russia, by which the power of that empire might be reduced and our own relative force increased in consequence. Whatever the faults of our institutions may be, there can be no doubt that they tend to stimulate, to the very utmost, the moral sensibility of those who live under them. Extreme publicity and perfect freedom of discussion, encouraged in practice even more fully than in theory, are by the necessity of the case moralizing agents, though they certainly favour somewhat crude and shallow views of morality. Human nature must be far worse than it has ever yet been known to be before men could explicitly avow, and systematically defend, immoral or even selfish principles of action. But those who argue on principles which they do not really hold, argue at a great disadvantage. No dexterity can permanently conceal the inconsistency between their premises and their conclusions, and the exposure of this inconsistency

gives their opponents a triumph which can neither be averted nor concealed. The influences under which they live put English statesmen under a stronger compulsion to be substantially honest in their policy towards other nations than the government of any other country; and it would be very unjust to deny that the sentiments of the people point consistently in the same direction. The opposite impression which prevails so widely is due almost entirely to the trick which we have fallen into of expressing contempt for what we imagine to be the bombast and hypocrisy of other nations by throwing over our own feelings a strange affectation of cynical frankness.

It would be easy to show how the same temper of mind produces similar criticisms on many other subjects. For instance, it is a most popular depreciatory commonplace to speak of the inability of English people to enjoy works of art. Scores of newspaper articles in the course of every year contrast the power which Englishmen show in the more serious pursuits of life with the complacency with which they endure all that is hideous in their capital and their other great cities. We can, it is said, make a constitution, but for upwards of twenty generations we have never made a public building or a fine street. Much might be said upon this subject if it were worth while. It might be shown, for instance, that that small minority of persons—small from the nature of the case in every nation whatever—who have great artistic power, has not, on the whole, been smaller or less influential in England than elsewhere, especially in the course of the last hundred years, and it might also be shown that the absence of that prodigal splendour which characterizes French public buildings (between which and our own we are always drawing comparisons) is the effect of most complicated causes, in which superior taste and capacity for art plays a very small part, but enough has been said to show the general nature of the criticisms referred to, and to prove their great injustice.

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## Amateur Music.

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THE cultivation of music as a recreation is not now confined in England to one class. While striking its roots down lower in the social scale, its topmost branches have also widened and strengthened. The study is not alone more general, it is also better understood and more seriously undertaken. If we have not yet returned to those "good old times" when, under the Stuart and Tudor dynasties, every member of a family could take his part in a glee or madrigal, and read the same at sight, we have at least left behind us the gloomy days which followed, when our grandfathers despised the accomplishment as one unfit for men, and our grandmothers' musical science (in justification of this contempt) was limited to a country dance on the spinnet. A reaction set in some years ago; yet not so long since but that Lady Blessington could venture in one of her books to pronounce openly against a man's occupying himself with music: an opinion, we will undertake to say, no writer would have the hardihood to propound in the present day. Such a view, indeed, could only be taken by one who regarded music in no other light than as a glittering superficial accomplishment, adopted solely for the purpose of shining in society, and tending to effeminate the character. The quiet firesides of thousands in our middle classes, when, evening after evening, husbands, sons, or brothers, sit down, after the day's work is done, to conquer the difficulties of some instrument, to make the stiff fingers pliant, the unsteady voice sure, without a thought of ever shining beyond the limits of that narrow circle: this fact alone would sufficiently refute any objectors to the rapid development of a musical taste among us, were objectors now to be found. We take it for granted there are not. It is only to the abuse of such gifts as the amateur musician happens to possess that exception is taken by just thinkers. A woman neglects her children's education for the sake of practising four hours a day; or a man fancies himself a Mario, and is a nuisance to all his friends, by shouting during a whole evening every tenor song he can find a quarter of a note flat; but it is hard if the cause of music be made to suffer therefrom. It sounds paradoxical to say that the ambition of young musicians seldom soars high enough, while there is at the same time a tendency to overstep certain limits which bound the legitimate field of the amateur. For such, we think, can be proved to be the case; and we, therefore, submit the following remarks to the reader's attention.

But first we would say a word relative to music on the Continent, and its progress among the masses, as compared with ours, during the last twenty years. In France music was once esteemed a courtly accomplish-

ment, without which no polished gentleman's education was held complete; and that this was often something more than mere manual dexterity, that the study extended to the difficult laws of composition, the many charming airs of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries—attributed to royal and noble authors—abundantly prove. It need hardly be said that the accomplishment, as such, was confined to one class; but even in that class it subsequently languished; and whereas it had never been so general in what may be called the upper-middle stratum of society as it was in England in the days of Elizabeth, so its revival in the present day has been longer deferred than with us. For anything except the very lightest order of music, there was until lately absolutely no taste among nine-tenths of the French nation; it was never a serious study, and in home circles ambition seldom soared beyond a waltz or a romance of Paul Henrion's. Within the last year or two, however, there have been indications of an awakened intelligence on the subject; foremost among which is the success which has attended the Popular Concerts of Classical Music, established in Paris, in imitation of our Monday Concerts. With a full and admirable orchestra, and first-rate solo performers, these concerts have attracted enthusiastic crowds. But it would be a mistake to deduce from this that the love of such music is universal, or that its cultivation in private life is greatly on the increase. There must always be a vast number of accomplished musicians in a great city like Paris, and to them the performance of this music is, in the first place, addressed. Fashion will subsequently cause crowds to follow, when, as in this case, the music is given with rare perfection of execution. In the provinces, however, we know of no instance where the introduction of classical music has been even attempted; while in such cities as Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, &c., the encouragement given to music of the highest class is a well-established fact. To relish such requires study; and the working population of France has not yet learnt to regard music as anything more than an agreeable tickling of the ears by a succession of lively tunes. There are no musical "societies," and part-singing is far less general than it has become of late years in England. We believe that Government—which takes so important a share in the support of the theatres—might do much to foster a love and diffuse a knowledge of the science of music throughout France, by the establishment of schools and scholarships. The Conservatoire does, and has for years done, more than any other body of musicians in Europe towards the encouragement and right direction of the art; but the influence of one body over a whole nation is necessarily small. That influence, indeed, is directed to a certain class only, and beyond its confines is scarcely felt. The production of such operas as Gluck's *Orpheus*, Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, &c., at one of the minor lyrical theatres of Paris, may, indeed, be fairly cited as evidence that good music can be appreciated by the lower orders; but again, the rare excellence of the performance—in the first instance, absolutely unparalleled—must be taken into account. The fact above referred to—



of the Government support of all the theatres—enables even the “Théâtre Lyrique,” with its low prices of admission, to secure the services of artists who are only known to us here through the medium of the exorbitant Italian Opera Houses. The artist is the first attraction in this case; the same music, otherwise sung, would not prove acceptable, we believe; and too much importance is not to be attached to the fact that artisans paying 1*l.* 50*c.* are drawn to hear the master-pieces of Gluck and Mozart thus rendered. Madame Viardot, as “Orpheus” at Shoreditch or Hoxton, would, we are confident, attract all London eastwards. It is a step in the right direction that the public of Paris should be rendered familiar, by degrees, with some of the master-pieces of the musical art; but there is still, in private life, little cultivation of the art, in its higher branches, at least.

It is not an unmeaning sentimental platitude to call Italy “the land of song.” It is so in reality: not because it has produced the very best singers the world has known, but because every peasant is endowed with musical feeling, more or less, and when nature has denied him an agreeable voice, he will still indicate, with a nasal twang, his keen perceptions of time, and tune, and accent. Every ragged boy that drives a mule, every washerwoman as she hangs out your shirts to dry, drones some *stornello*, or popular song; which the English traveller hearing, declares with irritation that “Italians are, after all, anything but a musical people.” Yet the very frequency of the infliction proves the case. Every one sings: consequently a great number of harsh and discordant sounds will constantly meet the ear; for it is quite a mistake to imagine that Italian voices are very generally sweet. A quick ear and a necessity to sing are distinct from the possession of a melodious organ; and the latter is perhaps not much more common in Italy than in England, though we must admit that its *exceptional* voices are unrivalled by those of any other country. As we ascend the social scale we do not find that the art is much cultivated. The dead level of mediocrity is rarely even attained; though there are instances, no doubt, where a degree of excellence has been reached by amateur singers in Italy, unknown in other countries. This does not, however, affect the statement we advance, and which any musical traveller is in a position to prove, that music, as a science, is wholly uncultivated in Italy. To account for this, it is only necessary to remember the lethargy under which the energies of the nation have so long languished. We cannot wonder that when higher and more solid branches of education have been neglected, nothing is done to elevate and direct a taste which is all but universal; and which, in consequence, runs wild after music of a violently emotional character, as might be expected among so impulsive a nation.

In turning to Germany, we find the measure of musical proficiency far greater than among any other people; though we hope the day is not distant when we may rival them. One can scarcely pass a night in a German town without having evidence that music is a part

of the daily routine of life, and one to which it has been thought worth while to bring study and perseverance. The solid fair-haired Frau whom we hear, between the intervals of cooking and household-washing, practising with assiduity a sonata of Mozart's or Beethoven's; the band of roystering students, singing with admirable precision their four-part songs, as they stroll, arm in arm, through the streets at night; the Society of Amateurs, which nearly every small town can boast, meeting weekly to perform the works of the great masters; in these, and many other ways, we discover, even on a superficial acquaintance, how strong a hold music has on the hearts of the people. Music, loved for its own sake; music, studied without any ulterior thought of display; music, as an end, not as a means, this is what the home-life of Germany presents to us, and what we hope to emulate in England.

But we have much yet to learn. And if some of the following remarks apply but to one class in our vast community, it must be remembered that here, more than in any other country, habits, tastes, and opinions are regulated by one class alone. It has been observed, that there is but a solitary instance of a book, after being rejected by the learned and refined, working its way up from the lower ranks, until it forced a place for itself in our standard literature. That book is the *Pilgrim's Progress*. In music, as in everything else, we are governed by the same laws. The opinions of the few are filtered in their downward course through society, but sooner or later they impregnate all classes. It becomes, therefore, of some importance to examine what the principles and practice of our upper ten thousand are, in this same matter of music.

The education seldom begins at the right end. Children are mostly taught upon a system which brings music near upon a level with dancing, as an exercise of dexterous agility, into which very little mental labour enters; and it has this drawback, that it seldom amuses the children as much. How to perform a certain number of pieces glibly is made to be the sole ambition of most young persons; which is not unlike teaching a child *The Whole Duty of Man* by heart, before he has learnt to spell. It seems difficult to believe that by such a course any but exceptional natures can learn to regard music as more than a mechanical employment, involving a certain quantity of hard manual labour, the wages of which are applause and social success. In the case of girls, where the study is thus prosecuted, it is not surprising that so little love exists for an occupation over which they have wasted so much time, that when they marry they feel they can do so no more, and entirely "give up music," as it is termed. It was an allurements which served its purpose, and is put away with waltzing and other attractions, now no longer needed. If the husband is, indeed, partial to the art, this may be staved off for a while, but at the end of ten years it hardly ever happens that the wife, who has been thus trained to regard "execution" as the first necessity of musical being, does not find her duties interfere with the amount of daily practice

essential to keep her hand in. It can hardly be otherwise where music is thus considered, and where the pleasure derived from it is purchased so dearly.

Were attention directed, on the other hand, to teaching children to read notes as fluently as they do letters, the results would be infinitely more satisfactory. To be able to decipher music with facility, is an unfailing possession. When acquired, it demands no practice, of necessity, to keep it up, and it may be a source of incalculable pleasure at times when no instrument is at hand. If to this be added some knowledge of thorough bass, and the laws which govern composition, the delight to be derived from the works of the great masters is more than doubled, and a precision and certainty attained which lead the student naturally to play a right chord even when a wrong one is written down. The same amount of time ordinarily bestowed on the acquirement of a manual dexterity (which, like mahogany, requires daily rubbing to retain its high polish,) will render a boy or girl a good musician. They will never, probably, astonish by performances which provoke comparison between the amateur and the professional; but if they possess taste and feeling, their playing will please far more than a scrambling imitation of Thalberg. These attainments are not dazzling ones; but they will enable people to play whatever is set before them without hesitation, and they will greatly increase the real love of music. As they become more general, too, they will tend to drain away that deluge of water-works in all its forms, whether as river, sluice, or fountain, wherewith society has been for some time overwhelmed.

To singers the above remarks apply with equal force. There is too little of solid foundation, and too much of the guinea-a-lesson veneer. Not that we undervalue the teaching of a first-rate master; far from it. When the voice can really be trained by such, the gain is almost incalculable. But the half dozen lessons which enable a young lady to style herself "a pupil of" So-and-So's, and by virtue of which she inflicts whole operas upon her friends, are, we are inclined to think, a doubtful advantage. That natural diffidence is too often destroyed which would otherwise lead its possessor to confine herself to more modest, unpretentious displays; where her defects, at all events, would not be so glaringly apparent. From having sung a few operatic airs as exercises, she is deluded into the idea that she is a prima donna, ready made—and the consequences are disastrous to society. This class of music, even when as well sung as it can be by an amateur, is generally offensive to good taste, when transplanted into a drawing-room, where it is impossible that the requisite dramatic expressions can be given. An air which is appropriate and effective in its proper place, becomes utterly meaningless and unprofitable when robbed of all that precedes and accompanies it. Of course there are exceptions, but we speak of this as the general rule. Not long since we heard a duet, preceded by four pages of recitative, of which the only recognizable words were "il bravo." We ask, what possible pleasure or benefit could accrue from such a performance? The singers

were doing their own talents, no less than the music they attempted to render, great injustice. When we consider how very few professional singers give us unmixed pleasure by the performance of this music (even on the stage, still less in the concert-room), it is scarcely possible that an amateur should do so. There is a field open to him, however, where he is not likely to come into competition with professional musicians. There is, of all countries, a large collection of chamber-music, almost inefficient for concert purposes, and dependent greatly for its effect on the delicacy and tenderness with which it is rendered. From Haydn to Schubert, from Gretry to Gounod, from Pergolesi to Gordiniani, not to speak of older masters, and the beautiful fragments of all times and countries that have been handed down to us, there is a choice vocal library from which the professional singer very rarely takes down a volume. Yet, though unsuited to public declamation, such music is just the most appropriate and the most effective in a private room. The phrensiad passion of a Norma, the ravings of a Lucia, the consumptive spasms of a Traviata are not here in their place. To say nothing of the voice, they demand a dramatic intensity of expression which very few even of those "to the manner bred" can get up on demand in a drawing-room, full of cold and quiet auditors. But a modest perception of the unsuitness of certain music for the resources at their command, is unfortunately what most of our very best amateurs never acquire.

Part-singing and part-playing cannot be too much encouraged ; both as necessitating precision, and also as tending to check an unwholesome craving for individual display. We see no reason why we should not become a musical people, in the highest sense of the word, if we work in the right direction. A more refined taste, and a more settled conviction of the value of positive knowledge, are already beginning to permeate the middle classes. It is a great gain that all the barriers of prejudice against music have been broken down ; that boys are permitted to be taught the art ; and that it is now generally held to be a rational and humanizing occupation for men of all conditions. That it is something more than this ; that it elevates and enlarges the imagination, while it induces clearness and exactitude of thought, those who pursue the science in love, and patience, and humility, will learn, day by day.

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## The Night before the Morrow.

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MAIDEN, said I, and I looked  
 In the maiden's solemn eyes,  
 Seen a moment meeting mine,  
 Then o'erhid like destinies.  
 We were sitting in the twilight,  
 And the clouds were golden yet,  
 And it seemed so strange to speak  
 With the words of olden yet.  
 Maiden, said I, when to-morrow  
 Cometh with the risen sun,  
 Then the morrow shall have come  
 That so long hath been to be;  
 Even now so far it seemeth:  
 Maiden, said I, speak to me.

But the maiden, sitting meekly  
 In the fiery sunset falling  
 Over tower and over tree,  
 Over her and over me,  
 Said me never back a word,  
 Never spake and never stirred,  
 While the silence of the sea  
 Kept the silence of the shore;  
 And she lifted up her eyes,  
 Only once like destinies:  
 I had thought to clasp her fondly,  
 But I trembled and forbore.

Maiden, said I, tell me thou:  
 And the fervour and impassion  
 Of the love with which I loved  
 Gathered on me, pleading now,  
 Till the winds of Heaven moved,  
 And the waves came wailing, wailing,  
 Wailing from the sea.  
 Maiden, said I, tell me thou:  
 Tell me truly if thou fearest  
 That which long hath been to be,  
 When it cometh now so near us  
 That between thee and the morrow  
 All that hath to pass away  
 Is the darkness of a night  
 And the breaking of a day—  
 Tell me truly, like the angels:  
 Maiden, said I, speak to me.

But the maiden still was silent,  
 Still was silent in the mellow  
 Light that lighted land and sea;  
 And she only for a moment  
 Raised her eyes again on me;  
 And she only for a moment  
 I rushed and faded suddenly  
 And thus all for all my pleading,  
 Done as if by one unheeding,  
 While the slow and listless waves  
 Died again upon the shore  
 This was all the maiden did,  
 Till the night-wind even told  
 That my love was mine no more

Maiden, said I, and I knelt:  
 And the twilight had grown deeper,  
 Till another light appearing,  
 Like a dream upon a sleeper,  
 Shone on land and shone on sea  
 Maiden, said I, tell me, maiden,  
 Hearing me as if unhearing,  
 Seeing me as if unseeing,  
 While the tide blood of my being  
 Beats to death because of thee  
 Tell me, my beloved, tell me,  
 As the God above shall say thee,  
 If for all the love I gave thee  
 Thou hast ever loved me—  
 Tell me truly, like the angels;  
 Maiden, said I speak to me

Then the maiden bent and kissed me,  
 Kissed me once, and kissed me twice,  
 With the kisses of her mouth,  
 Warm like winds that woo the south,  
 There beside the sea.

And the world was all before us,  
 And the night-stars trembled o'er us,  
 And the night-waves brake in chorus,  
 Calling on the day to be.  
 Come to-morrow, said the maiden;  
 Yea, thou truly lovest me.

## Professional Etiquette.

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SOME years ago a gentleman, who lived in a somewhat lonely part of the country, was asked to go and see a poor neighbour who was very ill. On his arrival he found the man at the point of death, and extremely anxious to see a clergyman. The visitor went to the house of a clergyman who lived near, and told him of the dying man's wish. The clergyman replied that as the house of the dying man was out of his parish he could not interfere, nor would any remonstrances induce him to do so. An eminent lawyer was so fortunate as to be made the heir of a rich and childless old man, who, falling ill, showed him his will, by which it appeared that the testator had given a life-interest only to his intended heir. When this was pointed out to the sick man he said, "Yes, but I understood you to say you meant never to marry?" "I may have said so," was the answer, "but I certainly did not seriously mean it, and at any rate I should not wish you to act upon that assumption." "Then," said the sick man, "draw up the will so as to give yourself the absolute property, and I will execute it." The lawyer replied, that he could not make a will in his own favour, and before another lawyer could be found the testator had died, and the mistake had become irreparable. A gentleman was poisoned but escaped with his life; the poison remained in his body, and caused him grievous suffering. He employed certain unrecognized remedies, and by means of them, as he considered, recovered his health, and got the poison out of his system. He went to an eminent physician and described his case. The physician said, "I will treat you on the supposition that you really have got rid of the poison, but don't tell of me, for the remedy, which, as you say, has got it out, is not recognized by the profession."

These illustrations are instances taken from the three learned professions of a sort of secret code of laws, of which the outside world understands neither the principles nor the applications, but which exercise a wider influence than most people would suppose over the proceedings of some of the most important classes of the community. Such rules are almost always unpopular, and even if they are acknowledged to exist, are submitted to unwillingly by the public, though, like almost all peculiar jurisdictions, they often seem to be regarded with a strange sort of unreasonable loyalty by those who are subject to their provisions. In all probability each feeling springs from the same root. Professional men like professional rules, because they are usually founded on the principle that the profession to which they apply is something extremely dignified, and as such, entitled to exact from its members a corresponding

demeanour, and from the public a corresponding degree of respect. The public view them with impatience, and at times even with disgust, because they are generally disposed to look upon them as organized hypocrisy, and because, at all events, they do not like to admit that any class has a right to claim any sort of permanent superiority over others. Each of these feelings acts, no doubt, as a useful check upon the other, and their relative force and utility depend upon the circumstances of the times and places in which they exist. In order to consider how they are related to each other in our own times it will be desirable to say a few words on the position which is at present occupied by professional men. Most of the liberal professions are closely connected with the Government. The Church, the Law in all its branches, and the Army and Navy may be considered as the great permanent link between the great bulk of the nation and the aristocracy. The nature of the connection is in each case obvious enough. An Established Church possessing endowments in every parish in the kingdom, and adorned with a certain number of such prizes as bishoprics and deaneries, offers to many thousands of families—who would otherwise have no sort of tie with the rich and great—a chance, remote it is true, but still appreciable, of becoming eminent, if not rich, and the certainty of occupying a position which ensures them the character and position of gentlemen, if their personal qualities enable them to assert and maintain it.

The profession of the law must always stand in the most intimate relation to the government of every country, whatever its form may be, for law and government are nearly convertible terms; and the mere fact that a man passes his life in putting in force, by the help of the law, the commands of the ruling power in the State naturally tends to give him a degree of sympathy with and interest in it, which would surprise those who have never seen it. The same is true even more strongly of the military and naval services, in which indeed the sentiment of a sort of special personal connection with the Government is carried almost to an unamiable extent.

The connection of other professions with the Government is less well marked and less important, though in a country like ours it pervades them all more or less. The medical profession is, in its essence, entirely independent of all the variable parts of human affairs. It discharges the same functions, under analogous conditions, in every part of the world, whatever may be the form of government of particular countries, or the circumstances of particular times; but, independent as it is in its substance, it has still a considerable connection with the Government. In most countries, and certainly in our own, the qualifications of medical men are ascertained by law, and bodies like the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and Apothecaries' Hall, have a corporate existence and corresponding legal powers. Besides this, the Government, in its capacity of an employer of every kind of intellectual labour on a large scale, exercises considerable direct influence over this as well as other callings. There are, indeed,

not more than one or two intellectual professions which are substantially unincorporated, and so completely unconnected with the political constitution of the country. Even in the case of art, there is the Royal Academy, with its own laws and customs. Literature can hardly be called a profession at all—so far as it is one, it is almost entirely lawless. Science, on the other hand, cannot, except in particular instances, be pursued as a regular occupation, unless those who pursue it are provided for by endowments, such as professorships, museums, or lectureships at scientific institutions. Professional etiquette may thus be described as a code of rules regulating to some extent the conduct, and deeply affecting the habits and feelings, of the members of all corporate professions. It also appears that, from the nature of the case, it always must be an essentially conservative institution, meant to maintain and carry out in practice whatever happens to be the established theory as to any particular profession, at any given time and place. How far, in our own time and country, is it a good thing? How far is the dislike with which it is regarded just?

The answer to these questions is obviously twofold. There are some merits and some defects inherent in professional rules as such. There are others which are appropriate to the rules which regulate the proceedings of every particular profession. The merit of professional rules, as such, almost always is that they are based upon a high-minded view of the nature of the profession to which they refer. For instance, the rule—a rule which has been recognized by and embodied in the law of the land—that the services of barristers and physicians are in substance gratuitous, and that the payment which they receive is voluntary on the part of the person to whom it is rendered, is no doubt based upon the general principle that the skill of both the lawyer and the physician ought to be regarded to some extent as an advantage, not to its possessor merely, but to all who stand in need of it, and that the rewards to be earned by those who acquire it are not to be measured exclusively by commercial principles. This rule, like many others, is an attempt, which may or may not be skilful, to give form to the sentiment that men have a common interest in the administration of justice and in the cure of disease, and that those who specially devote their attention to such subjects should, in doing so, be actuated not merely by the ordinary selfish motives of interest and ambition, but also by the nobler wish to promote the common good. The existence of such a sentiment, so long as it is put into a reasonable shape and kept within due bounds, is no doubt an excellent thing, but it is open to the great objection that it never is, nor can be, consistently acted on, and that, if it is professed without being acted on, it becomes the source of hypocrisy and falsehood.

It must, however, be observed that the existence of these things does not imply the total absence of that higher vein of sentiment upon the assumption of the existence of which the rules in question proceed. There is amongst the better kind of lawyers a sincere desire to do justice,

or rather not to do injustice, and it is by no means an uncommon thing for them to be infinitely more peace-making than the inclination of their clients would lead them to be. That physicians have as a rule a most sincere and disinterested wish to do what they can to alleviate human suffering is within the experience of every family in the country. Hence professional etiquette may be regarded as a sort of black and white shield, on one side of which is written "principles," and on the other "hypocrisy." That the two do to some extent reproduce each other cannot be denied. It is in the nature of anything that approaches to a definite system of rules to do so. Professional rules are perhaps more open to this objection than most other systems, for they not only hold out the temptation to irregularity which is held out by rules of every description, but they hold it out to one particular class. The successful members of professions can afford to act upon high principles. A barrister or physician who counts his income by thousands has no occasion to fish for briefs or patients. It is often worth his while to tell disagreeable truths, and to refuse mean compliances, and it would be worth his while to do so even if he looked merely at the consequences as measured in fees, for though the immediate result might give offence to those by whom fees are dispensed, yet the general character for independence is to such a man matter of primary importance, and one which it would be worth his while to retain at the expense of a considerable money sacrifice. This, however, is true principally of successful men. It is on those who are just beginning to get on in their profession that the rules of professional etiquette weigh most heavily, and it is amongst them accordingly that they are most frequently disregarded, and that they cause the greatest amount of hypocrisy. To a man who, after years of suspense and difficulty, is just beginning to succeed, any one who has power to promote or hinder his success is a great man, and the immediate importance of pleasing him is such, that if professional rules stand in the way of doing so it requires great courage and good faith to act up to them. The most unpleasant and unamiable result of professional etiquette is the production of a class of men who enforce against others rules which they put themselves into a position to enforce by disregarding them during the earlier period of their career. Unpleasant as this may be, and wide as is the field which it opens to sarcasm, there can be little doubt that on the whole professional etiquette is a good, though it is often a highly invidious thing. Nearly all the most important affairs of life are in the hands of professional men, and the honour and dignity with which they are conducted depends to a great extent on the maintenance of a high sense of professional honour amongst those who conduct them, and to this sense of honour systems of etiquette contribute on the whole, though subject to the deductions just referred to.

To discuss the merits and defects which belong not to all professional rules as such, but in relation to the particular subjects to which they refer, it would be necessary to go through all the leading professions, and to possess a familiarity with their usages, and with the practical effects of

them which hardly any one possesses. The limits of the present paper, to say nothing of any other reason, would render such a course impossible on the present occasion, but some observations may be made on the subject of the professional rules of lawyers—rules which are, perhaps, the most important and most characteristic of their class. The most important of these rules is that by which the profession is divided into two branches—attorneys and solicitors on the one hand, and barristers on the other. It is often asked, and with a great deal of reason, why the distinction should be kept up. In one of those singular controversies on what are sometimes described as “social” subjects which are sometimes admitted into the columns of *The Times*, a succession of anonymous voices crying in the wilderness, asked, on the one hand, “Why should not I, the client, see you, the barrister, face to face? Why, if I want a lease drawn, must I go to an attorney and pay him a long bill filled with aggravating items, when you who draw the deed get only one item out of the bill, and that not a large one?” Other anonymous persons, dating principally from the Temple and Lincoln’s Inn, replied in woeful tones, “Why, in truth, should not you pay to us an angel’s visit, and some three or four guineas, for which we would give you a lease which any law-stationer could engross, and which would be quite as good as the one for which the attorney (who, alas! does not come to us; such, at least, was the inference which the tone of the letters suggested) would charge you, say, twenty pounds?” Such laments arise from time to time without producing any particular result, and it is worth while to inquire why they do not, and why they should not.

The general theory of the distinction between the two branches of the legal profession would seem to be that the one is, and the other is not, a liberal profession; that the barrister is the superior and the attorney the inferior; that the one requires the manners, the accomplishments, and the education of a gentleman, and that these things are not to be expected of the other. Hence on all public occasions whatever the barrister is the conspicuous person. He sits in high places, and wears the professional uniform. The attorney comes to him, and he is fenced off from going to the attorney with a degree of care which seems to indicate that his virtue requires external fortification. Then, again, the attorney sends in his bill, and, if it is not paid, may bring an action for it; but the barrister has no claim whatever for his fees. According to the strictest view of the subject, he ought hardly to notice them; that is to say, he cannot in any way proportion the work to the money: a tariff is provided, specifying the prices below which he is not allowed to go, but beyond that he ought by rights to take what comes and make no bargains. This general view of his position is corroborated in detail by a number of little usages, all of which may be traced to the operation of the same sentiment.

If this general view of the profession be compared with the facts, a remarkable divergence between them displays itself. It is no doubt true that, if the duties of the two professions are compared, those of the

barrister require the higher qualities—at least, in the higher class of men; but it is far from being true that the two professions differ on the whole as superior and inferior. The most distinguished members of the bar occupy, no doubt, a higher position than the most eminent attorney or solicitor; but the lower class of barristers would stand very low indeed amongst attorneys. It is childish to look on a man who passes his life in prosecuting and defending petty criminals at the Old Bailey and the quarter sessions, as in any respect the superior of one who has to manage the most important affairs of private families and public bodies. There are probably very few barristers who have to transact business as important as that which comes before the solicitors to a great railway company or any other great trading body. On what grounds, then, can the existing distinction between the two branches of the profession of the law be maintained, and what meaning has it?

In so far as it implies any personal superiority on the part of every barrister as such over every attorney as such, it is certainly idle and injurious, and ought not to be maintained at all. It ought, on the contrary, to be strenuously discouraged, for it operates in a singularly absurd and injurious way. It has undoubtedly produced a foolish notion that the profession of a barrister is much more fit for a gentleman than that of an attorney, and that the latter profession does not form one of the few callings between which a young man has to choose after completing that sort of education at a public school and university on which English parents (not unjustly) set so high a value. Novels afford excellent illustrations of the current fancies of the public on such topics as these. In a story lately published, Mrs. Gaskell makes the whole subsequent career of her hero turn on the fact that, instead of sending him from Eton to Oxford and thence to the bar, his father took him into partnership in his own firm, which had transacted the business of all the country gentlemen of a prosperous county time out of mind. The young man is mortified by finding that his old schoolfellows do not consider him as their equal, and ultimately (not exactly in his capacity of a solicitor, but on general grounds) knocks his partner on the head and buries him in a flower-garden, where he reposes till he is dug up in a railway cutting.

The prejudice which remotely contributed to this rash act undoubtedly exists, though, when looked at steadily, it is so absurd that it is hardly credible that it should exist. A man who picked up a scanty livelihood by holding briefs at circuit and sessions would, if his personal qualities entitled him to such treatment, be received as an equal by the acquires whose pride so grievously mortified Mr. Wilkins; yet Mr. Wilkins's occupations required probably more mind, and certainly involved the possession of far greater power, and the receipt of a very much larger income. If the foolish notion which depreciates the importance and denies the dignity of such occupations were as universally despised as it ought to be, two great benefits would result to the very classes who keep up the prejudice. In the first place, the absurdly small



list of professions recognized as liberal would be increased, and, though it would be increased by one only, this would be an increase in the proportion of 20 or 25 per cent. A young man leaving college may become a clergyman, a barrister, a doctor, or a soldier, or he may try to get an Indian appointment. For various reasons the number of such youths who become clergymen is rapidly decreasing, and is not likely to increase. To be a doctor requires special tastes, and though the profession of a soldier is an excellent one to die in, it holds out little prospect of living with comfort, except to those who could live as well without it. The Indian service is for some strange reason not very popular; of course the number of those who can enter it is strictly limited. Hence year after year the long list of idlers at the bar increases and multiplies. What such men do with themselves it is not easy to say, unless they write to *The Times* to know whether they can marry on 800*l.* a year. If the profession of an attorney stood, as it ought, upon the same footing in regard of social consideration as that of a barrister, numbers of these men might be both usefully and profitably employed in it. With good connections, good manners, a good head for business, and money enough to buy a partnership, a man may be pretty sure of a good income, and of an occupation which will not only provide for his expenses, but give vigorous exercise to all his faculties. It is surely the height of folly to look with prejudice on such an occupation.

It is undoubtedly true that the public prosperity, in the best sense of the word, depends to a great extent on the degree in which the institutions of a country are calculated to produce and to reward the moral and intellectual qualities which go to make up what we understand by a gentleman, and it is also true that there is no country in the world in which such qualities have been or are held in such esteem as in our own. In order to keep up this state of things, notwithstanding the changes which time produces in the state of society, it is absolutely indispensable that gentlemen should be always ready to show practically as well as theoretically that they are better fitted as such for any kind of business to which they may put their hands than those who have no claim to the title; in short, that they occupy the best places because they are the best men, instead of claiming to be the best men because they are put in the best places. It is a trite remark, that the stability of the House of Lords is owing to the fact that it is continually being recruited by the most distinguished members of all the principal classes in the community. The stability and permanence of aristocracy, in that wider sense of the word in which it applies to all persons who have the sentiments, the manners, and the education of gentlemen, depends on the extension of that education to as many classes as possible. If the time should ever come when as much courtesy and polish was expected of a crossing-sweeper as is now expected of a peer of the realm, the position of the peer of the realm would be better than it is now, for the grounds on which he ought to rest his claims to respect would be understood and admitted

by all the world, and the respect, if he deserved it, would be paid without grudging or envy.

Every one, therefore, who wishes to see high and honourable feelings and educated minds invested with the importance which properly belongs to them, ought to discourage every prejudice which deters gentlemen from entering upon any kind of occupation, and to enlarge, as much as possible, the number of occupations conventionally regarded as liberal professions.

Apart, however, from the advantages which would accrue to the class of young men who have to choose their professions from having a larger number to choose from, there can be no doubt that great advantages would result to the public from the fact of the profession of an attorney being regarded as a liberal profession. The prejudice noticed above may be and is foolish, and as regards the better members of the profession scandalously unjust, but it cannot truly be described as unfounded. There are amongst attorneys and solicitors a large proportion of men as well educated, possessed of as high principles of honour, and as much entitled, in all respects, to every sort of social consideration, as any members of the community; but there are also a considerable number of persons of whom not one of these assertions is true. There are many attorneys to whom a man might with perfect satisfaction intrust his character and his fortune. There are also many whom, if he was wise, he would not trust with the opportunity of forging his name. It is obvious that the public estimation in which the profession as a whole is held will have a great effect on the relative numbers and influence of these classes. Men are always judged by the standard of their profession, and so long as attorneys are viewed with prejudice, the less respectable members of the profession will always be able to say, I am only an attorney, you do not expect me to act up to the standard of what in other walks of life would be considered honourable and high-minded.

If the public sentiment at large did consider the profession of an attorney as a liberal profession, in the full sense of the words, and if that sentiment produced its natural effects on those who were the objects of it, there can be little doubt that the result on the management of a vast mass of affairs would be in the highest degree beneficial. No one can tell, who has not seen and felt it, what an amount of irritation and heart-burning an attorney may cause, with the best intentions in the world, merely by faults of manner, and by being suspicious and over-cautious in the wrong place. For instance, a marriage settlement is to be drawn, the solicitor who draws it is an honest and sensible man, but has little delicacy either of feeling or expression. He is almost sure to look upon the matter as a sort of hostile suit, in which he is to assume every sort of dishonest intention on the other side, to think that every restriction which he can place upon the enjoyment by the one party of the property of the other is so much gained for his own side, and so to make a settlement which can never be anything else than a vexation and incumbrance to both parties, unless, indeed, they live together on such terms that it would have been

better if they had never been married at all. This is just the sort of negotiation in which the tact and manners of a gentleman are at least as important as knowledge either of law or of business.

It appears from all this to follow that the sentiment on which the professional etiquette between the two branches of the legal profession is founded is wrong, but it does not follow from this that there is no other principle on which it can be justified. In the United States and in some of our own colonies the distinction between barristers and attorneys is unknown. A lawyer is a lawyer. He sits in his office and goes to his clients as he finds it convenient, and goes into court and there pleads the cause which he has prepared for trial whenever it seems advisable to do so. Does it follow from what has just been said that this is the right course to take, that the two branches of the profession ought to be fused into one, and that the professional etiquette which prevents a barrister from communicating with his client in the first instance, and from collecting the materials on which he afterwards has to address the court, is a mere prejudice. This is by no means a necessary consequence. It may well be that an attorney is entitled to as much social consideration as a barrister, and yet that the two professions are fundamentally distinct, and require both a different education and a different set of professional rules. The more the matter is considered the more it will appear that this is the case, and American experience does not really conflict with this; for so distinct are the two branches of the profession that, as a rule, one member of the firm takes the advocate's department, and the other or others that of the attorney.

Legal business may be divided into that which is and that which is not contentious. Certain kinds of Chancery suits, actions at law, and, in a word, all business which is conducted in a hostile manner between the parties, and which leads to what in the popular sense of the word are called trials, belong to the first class. Sales, negotiations, conveyancing in all its branches, the establishment of companies, and innumerable matters of the same kind, belong to the second. It is in contentious business, or in the steps preparatory to it, such as drawing pleadings, giving opinions, advising on evidence and the like, that barristers are engaged, and their prospect of eminence in their profession depends upon the degree in which they possess the requisite gifts for it. It is by fighting a long succession of battles in a number of different arenas, from the quarter sessions up to the House of Lords, that a man comes to be a judge or a vice-chancellor. The greatest attorneys have comparatively little to do with such scenes. There are many eminent attorneys who hardly ever deliver a brief or issue a writ. They are to barristers what diplomatists are to soldiers. There is the army in the background ready to fight the matter out if hard comes to hard, but the attorney shows his skill far more in keeping out of court than in coming into it. His business is to advise his client not so much on his legal rights as on the course of policy which as a man of sense he ought to follow, whereas the barrister

looks to victory in the particular battle in which at the moment he is engaged. He may think his client foolish for having come into court at all, but that is his affair, and as he is there he has to see that he gets his rights, whether or not they are worth getting. Hence the two sets of men use the law for totally different purposes, and require a different kind of knowledge of it. All that an attorney wants for practical purposes is a broad general knowledge of the principles and rules which are most commonly applied in practice. With that amount of knowledge he will be able in ordinary cases to give sound advice. He will be able to tell a man broadly about a will or a purchase, or a contract, and to show him how he may carry out his intentions without exposing himself to any chance of disappointment. In short, he can guide him through the ordinary routine, and advise him as to the policy of transactions which take their natural course, and arrive at their expected conclusion.

The knowledge which the barrister requires, on the other hand, is a knowledge not so much of rules as of principles. It will not do for him to know generally—to put a very simple case—what is the regular way of making a particular kind of agreement, but he must also know, or at least must be able to find out, what will happen if it is made in an irregular manner, and what will be the particular consequences of different degrees of irregularity. He must not only know his way along the road, but he must in case of need be able to take an observation, and find out his position on the chart.

It is obvious that a different sort of education is required in order to get these different sorts of knowledge of the law. There is no reason for representing the two callings as superior and inferior, but they are radically distinct. A man might be an admirable attorney without the slightest pretensions to being a good lawyer in the barrister's sense of the words, and he might be a first-rate lawyer and an excellent advocate, without having any of the qualities which would fit him for an attorney. Where there is of necessity a difference in the kind of education required for different walks of life, there ought to be, and, under some form or other, there always will be, a distinction between the walks of life themselves.

These considerations answer the questions asked by the newspaper correspondents referred to above, as to the reason why the barrister should be approachable only through the attorney. The answer is, that as there is a substantial distinction between the duties of the two men, it is better to lay down a rule which prevents them from interfering with each other. Of course, if the original client would be his own attorney, and would himself do what the attorney does for him, he might dispense with the attorney, but as a general rule, if he went to a barrister instead of an attorney he would find that he didn't get what he wanted. To take the case which was discussed in the newspapers. Suppose a man goes himself to a barrister, and says, "Draw me a lease of such a house," the barrister might, no doubt, take his instructions and draw the lease;

which when copied out by the law-stationer would look as neat and formal as if it had come through an attorney's office. It is, however, ten to one that the lease would be a mere snare and delusion. In order to make it worth having, it is necessary to have the title examined, searches made in various registers, original deeds compared with copies, and all manner of questions discussed in which the expediency of standing on a strict legal right is at least as important as the question of the existence of such a right. If the barrister is to do all this, besides drawing the lease and settling the phraseology of particular clauses, he must of course be paid for it, and then the client gains nothing except that he pays one man instead of another. If he does not do it, what is the lease worth?

This general difference between the duties and objects of the two professions is the root from which many other differences spring. Litigation is private warfare. It is the process by which, in an advanced and polished state of society, men redress their wrongs by the intervention of physical force. The ultimate result of a lawsuit, the gist and essence of the whole proceeding, without which it would not take place at all, is not the decision that the one party is right and the other wrong, but the fact that the one party seizes and carries off in a cart to the auction-room the other's household furniture, or sends his body to gaol. Private as well as public war has its rules, and its hardships are considerably mitigated by their observance. By distinguishing between the barrister and the attorney, the soldier and the diplomatist, considerable security is given to the public at large that the contest shall be fought out in a satisfactory manner. If the parties themselves conducted their own causes, courts of justice would constantly present spectacles like those which sometimes occur in the county courts, especially when the parties are females. A question having arisen touching a sale of eggs or crockery, one of the ladies became so furious that the judge (not very legally) ordered a policeman to put her in the corner, with her face to the wall, till the other side had said her say. If the attorneys who advised the proceedings, knew the parties from the first, and took all the evidence, were also to conduct the case in court, they would no doubt import far more personal feeling and much less temperate zeal into the matter than is the case at present—a conclusion which county-court experience confirms. The interposition of another link greatly cools matters down, and saves the public time, to say nothing of decency and propriety.

The position thus assigned to barristers gives birth to the whole of that system of professional rules by which it is determined what a barrister may and may not say and do in the management of a cause. They are numerous and somewhat too technical to admit of popular explanation, but they are, on the whole, a great safeguard to the public against needless harshness in the discharge of what cannot but be a harsh and unamiable process.

## Imitated from the Troubadour Sordel.



HER words, methinks, were cold and few;  
 We parted coldly; yet  
 Quick-turning after that adieu,  
 How kind a glance I met!  
 A look that was not meant for me,  
 Yet sweeter for surprise,  
 As if her soul took leave to be  
 One moment in her eyes;  
 Now tell me, tell me, gentle friends,  
 Oh, which shall I believe,  
 Her eyes, her eyes that bid me hope,  
 Her words that bid me grieve?

Her words, methinks, were few and cold:  
 What matter! Now I trust,  
 Kind eyes, unto your tale half-told,  
 Ye speak because ye must!  
 Too oft will heavy laws constrain  
 The lips, compelled to bear  
 A message false; too often fain  
 To speak but what they dare;  
 Full oft will words, will smiles betray,  
 But tears are always true;  
 Looks ever mean the thing they say:  
 Kind eyes, I trust to you!

Her looks were kind—oh, gentle eyes,  
 Love trusts you! Still he sends  
 By you his questions, his replies,  
 He knows you for his friends.  
 Oh, gentle, gentle eyes, by Love  
 So trusted, and so true  
 To Love, ye could not if ye would  
 Deceive, I trust to you!

## Was Nero a Monster ?

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It, as is not improbable, the title of this essay should mislead readers into the notion that a playful paradox is about to be presented, they are begged to discard that suggestion at once, and to believe that my purpose is entirely serious. Indeed, one may consider it a proof of the imperfect condition of historical science that such a title should for a moment wear the aspect of a grim jest. At any rate, let me declare that nothing can be further removed from the spirit of this essay than the playful irony which would paint the mansuetude of one on whose name rests universal execration, or than the dialectical sophistry which would extenuate crimes until they almost wore the air of virtues. That Nero was an exemplary son, a loving husband, a sagacious statesman, or a reputable emperor, I altogether disbelieve ; indeed one cannot resist the impression that he was a vain, dissolute, contemptible, and miserable man, not without good qualities, but with many vices, and placed in a situation where his vices must have been fearfully fostered. He *may* have been a monster little better than his fame. I do not know that he was ; I do not even suspect that he was ; but what I do know—with all the certainty possible in such a case—is, that in support of the capital charges against him, charges universally accepted without question, there is not for a rational inquisitive mind *any evidence whatever*.

This is a paradox which challenges the attention of all who interest themselves in History ; a paradox in the true, and not the popular sense of the word, namely, in the sense of a statement which is at variance with the dominant opinion, though not in itself at variance with reason. There may be something, at first, to raise the reader's misgiving when he hears that a reputation so loaded with infamy as never yet to have found an apologist, rests upon charges which not only ought to have awakened scepticism by their very enormity and self-contradictions, but prove, on close inspection, to be utterly in defiance of all credit, and without even a semblance of warranty ; yet the proof of such assertions is by no means difficult.

Many revolutions in our historical appreciations have already taken place. The application of Science, and above all of scientific scepticism, to History, has yet to be made ; it will be fruitful in results. Niebuhr changed the whole aspect of Roman history by simply discriminating its mythological elements. But Niebuhr, keen-sighted among texts, and familiar with mythology, was as obtuse as his predecessors in all that related to psychology ; and not being versed in science, was unable to detect fictions which any scientific sceptic would at once expose. I say

scientific *sceptic*, because, as will presently appear, the mere possession of knowledge does not suffice to shake off that lethargy of credulity which oppresses the faculties of men whenever they pass beyond the laboratory into the wide spaces of History. They forget the lessons they have so laboriously learned, and so sedulously practised; they unhesitatingly accept as evidence respecting a character or an event, statements which, if offered respecting a phenomenon or a cause, would be subjected to a rigid scrutiny and vigilant verification.

There is nothing on which the generality of mankind, even the cultivated, need instruction more than on what constitutes Evidence. In Science we are forced to be vigilant. In Jurisprudence the keen interests of contending intellects fix attention upon every fact or semblance of a fact. But in most other departments our supineness is wonderful; and historians have been especially remarkable for throwing all their ingenuity into the construction of inferences and the accumulation of probabilities, instead of first carefully ascertaining whether the "facts" themselves were not worthless. Positive statements exercise a sort of fascination over the mind, coercing its assent; and what is once positively asserted often takes place unchallenged as historical fact. I have been made sensible of this lately by having, for a special purpose, to read the Roman historians. The picture they have painted of the empire is so remarkable an example of the unreflecting credulity with which History is mostly written, that I have resolved to take the character of Nero as an illustration of what would result if men began seriously to investigate the evidence on which the mass of traditional opinions is founded.

The evidence, and that alone, will claim attention here; nothing will be attempted in the way of extenuation, or apology. The admirers of Lord Bacon explain his conduct towards Essex, and his corruption on the bench, by adducing extenuating circumstances which may, or may not, mitigate the verdict passed upon the acts; but no advocate denies the facts, however he may interpret them. Not thus will the character of Nero be discussed. It is on the acts themselves, and not on their interpretation, that scepticism will rest. It is the crimes themselves which will be shown as unworthy of a place among historical facts. Whether Nero were on a level with the moral standard of his age, or miserably below that standard, is beside my present purpose; I simply mean to show that there is no evidence for the crimes of which he is accused.

In order to keep this essay within the requisite limits, only the four chief crimes imputed to him will be noticed. If it can be shown that the murder of Britannicus, the murder of his mother, the burning of Rome, and the murder of his wife, the chief acts on which rests the infamy of his name, are in all respects unworthy of credence, the evidence being sometimes even childish in its absurdity, there will be no need to investigate the minor charges. To show this, I shall require no captious subtlety; nor will it be necessary to demand from history the rigorous verification demanded in science. It will be enough to invoke the common sense of



an ordinary jury. I shall let the witnesses tell their own story, and shall merely request the jury to appreciate its probability.

Let us first call the witnesses. They are three writers who lived long after the recorded events occurred, and who drew their contradictory records from the gossip of Rome. For most public acts it is probable that they had authentic documents; but for the private acts of individuals, and the *motives* which actuated these individuals, there were no documents whatever; at any rate, none which can be authenticated. It is specially noticeable that no contemporary actor in these scenes comes forward with his direct testimony; nor, indeed, is any one invoked by name as a witness. It is also noticeable that long after the imputed crimes had been committed Nero was eminently popular both with people and senate. Three years after the imputed matricide, the stern and virtuous Thraseas could speak with praise of Nero and his government. Fear may have suppressed contemporary accusations. But when the tyrant was dead why did not the accusers come forward? And why did not Seneca and Burrhus, when condemned to death, avenge themselves on Nero by revealing what they are supposed to have known so well? It is certain that stories circulated at Rome respecting Nero, both in his lifetime and for years afterwards; but before we believe such stories we must demand that at least some authenticity better than that of gossip be shown to belong to them; we must ask who vouches for their truth, and what were his means of knowing it.

Suetonius, Tacitus, and the Greek, Dion Cassius, are the three historians cited as witnesses against Nero. What credit can they claim? Suetonius, from whom the worst stories proceed, was not born till many years after Nero's death, and did not write until some forty years after the events. Tacitus was six years old when Nero died, and wrote many years after the events. Dion Cassius lived some hundred and fifty years later. Let us ask what would be the credibility of historians writing about Cromwell long after the Protectorate had been destroyed, and with nothing but the rumours current in royalist circles to furnish the facts; in such narratives what sort of figure would that heroic man present? Fortunately for his fame he left a party. Grave and thoughtful men preserved traditions and records which rescued him from the vindictive accusations of his enemies. Nero left no defenders. He died after having estranged the Romans. Those whom he had thrived, those whom he had neglected, those whom he had outraged survived to slander him, and greedy gossip caught up every story without fear of reproof. That Tacitus and Suetonius heard and believed stories of the bad emperor, is no evidence to us that such stories were true; and when we pass from this general scepticism to particular investigation, we find that even had the historians been contemporaries and senators their evidence (in respect to the crimes we shall consider) would be worthless. For, in the first place, we find these writers self-condemned as untrustworthy witnesses, unless when their statements admit of confirmation; and, in the second place, we find them testifying to

that which is preposterous, when not flagrantly false, testifying to things which they could not have known, and things which could not have happened.

Although my reading of Tacitus and Suetonius has not impressed me with respect for their trustworthiness, but, on the contrary, with surprise at the naïveté and uncritical laxity with which they repeat stories too monstrous for belief,\* I do not here intend to rest my case for Nero on such a defect in the witnesses. Nor will I take advantage of the fact, that if they speak against Nero, they speak with almost equal animosity against the Christians; though it is quite arbitrary to refuse that credit to their aspersions of the hated sect, which is given to their aspersions of the hated emperor. If we admit that ignorance, party spirit, and the rancour of jealous opponents misrepresented the Christians, we must also admit that similar sources of misrepresentation existed with respect to Nero. The objection that Tacitus knew nothing of the Christians, and only trusted the reports of their enemies, whereas the acts of Nero were public and notorious, therefore known to many, is specious, but will not bear examination; for it is not the public *acts* of Nero on which rests the infamy of his name, it is on the private *motives* imputed to him for acts he is *supposed* to have committed; precisely as it is on no proved acts of the Christians, but on their "detestable doctrines and avowed hatred of the whole human race" that rests their infamy in the historian's judgment. Now the evidence for the imputations against Nero I affirm to be absurdly defective, resolving itself into mere suspicion, often preposterous. Montaigne, speaking of the severity of Tacitus with regard to Pompey, says pithily, "We ought not to weigh suspicion against evidence, and therefore I do not believe him here."

Britannicus died suddenly. This is a fact, the notoriety of which removes it beyond scepticism. That he was murdered, is an *inference*, and one which we shall presently see reason to discredit altogether. That his death was suspected—nay, believed—to have been caused by poison, and that Nero was suspected of being the poisoner, are also notorious facts; but these suspicions do not convert what is mere inference into fact—they do not, as historians imagine, make the *truth* of the charges as notorious as the charges. No man is convicted on suspicion, unless the suspicion is fortified by a mass of evidence. But before the bar of History accusation often has the weight of proof.

Every reader must be aware of the immense amount of fiction which historians mingle with their narratives, fiction not less purely drawn from their imagination than are similar scenes in romance: interviews are

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\* It is needless to cite cases; some of them, indeed, cannot be spoken of in English; but any one curious to measure the credulity of these writers may turn to Tacitus, *Annales*, lib. xiii. c. 13 and 17, and Suetonius, in *Nerone*, c. 20. The story of the soldier whose hands fell from his arms and clung to the faggots, owing to the intense cold (Tacit. xiii. c. 25), and various miracles and prodigies gravely narrated, belong to the general credulity of the age.

circumstantially related, and conversations of some length repeated, in which horrible crimes are planned and damnatory disclosures revealed by the actors, yet the narrator never volunteers to give his guarantee for his accuracy; never informs us who was present at these interviews and took down the conversations, or who betrayed to him secrets of this importance. Conspirators and criminals, we know, sometimes confess, and still oftener betray their comrades; when such confession and betrayal can be adduced, they take their place as evidence. But the mere supposition of an interview in which takes place an imaginary conversation is, in the strictest sense of the word, Fiction, though it passes as History. Nero and his accomplices might have revealed their guilty thoughts, might have confessed their crimes under the stress of death-bed repentance, or under the terrors and agonies of torture; but as no one pretends that this *was* done, we must inquire how historians became acquainted with facts which, from the nature of the case, would be jealously hidden? Thus dialogues which the novelist or dramatist offers as the work of imagination, the historian calls upon us to accept as grave fact. This vice is so deeply rooted in all history that there is scarcely one writer who is conscious of writing pure fiction, when he explains an event by imagining who may have been its prime movers, and what may have been their motives. In a court of law this would be held as childish. In a private circle, when the character of a friend was involved, it would be instantly and indignantly repudiated. But the fiction which would not impose upon a jury, or gain credence in private, is received without hesitation when palmed off as history.

So much for the testimony of the historians in general. I now pass to the appreciation of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion Cassius when narrating the crimes of Nero; and my first appeal shall be to Science. Poisoning plays a great part in all ancient annals, and naturally we meet with it in the charges against Nero. The ignorance of ancient writers excuses statements which in our days would be inexcusable; but their credulity is no excuse for ours; what they believed, we ought to have seen at once to be incredible. In the Middle Ages, when an epidemic raged, it was usually asserted that the Jews had poisoned the wells. When a king, or eminent person, died suddenly without ostensible cause, a suggestion of poison naturally arose to explain the death. We are slower in making such accusations now; not because poisoning has become less frequent, but because the public has become more enlightened. Yet—and the remark is curious—our enlightenment is rarely brought to bear upon the past; and we suffer statements respecting historical persons to pass unchallenged which if advanced respecting contemporaries would excite laughter or contempt. No physiologist of the present day would listen without a smile to people who assured him that Louis Napoleon preserved himself by antidotes against attempts at poisoning; it would be as easy to believe in the virtue of amulets. Yet even physiologists read statements of this nature in history with passive acquiescence, owing to that lethargy of

credulity which, as I have said, comes over them when they are listening to narratives of the past. Thus, to cite but one example, in an elaborate treatise on poisons,\* by one of the first toxicologists of our day, may be found repeated the nonsense of Tacitus and Suetonius about Locusta (hereafter to be exhibited), without a hint of its being incredible, without a remark on its contradiction to all scientific knowledge. Had I sufficient leisure I would collect together some of the most famous cases of poisoning recorded in history, and convict them of manifest falsehood from the very details circumstantially narrated; just as one may dissipate such fables as those of Caligula and Cleopatra, who are said to have shown their reckless extravagance by dissolving in their wine pearls of great price, by simply mentioning the fact that pearls are *not* soluble in wine.

But for the present we have only to deal with the poisoning of Britannicus. The case is doubly interesting. It is one of the most "notorious" of murders; and has, I believe, never until this day found any one to question it since Tacitus and Suetonius first circumstantially related the details. Yet a verdict more flagrantly in defiance of common sense and science has seldom been given. Nero, we are told, hated Britannicus because of his sweet voice, and feared him as a possible pretender to the throne. Here are the motives imagined; let us now see them in operation. The tyrant, we are told, unable to bring any accusation against him (which in those days of conspiracy was surely strange), *secretly* resolved to murder him; and this secret resolve becomes known to the narrators, but *how* they gained the knowledge is not mentioned. It was confided to Julius Pollio, tribune of a prætorian cohort, who at that moment held in prison, under sentence of death, Locusta, notorious for her crimes—*multa scelerum fama*. She was ordered to prepare a poison; this poison was administered to Britannicus; but it was too slow in its operation; and Nero, sending for her, beat her, and vowed that she had supplied an antidote. Whereupon she prepared before his own eyes, and in his own room, a deadly poison, the strength of which was essayed on a pig, whose instant death satisfied Nero that now he had got what he desired. The banquet was prepared. Britannicus was seated at a separate table magnificently served, in presence of his relatives and several young nobles. A slave stood at his side to taste of every dish and every beverage, as a precaution against poison; and this slave it was necessary to spare, otherwise his death, occurring at the same time, would betray the murder. To avoid this betrayal the following expedient was imagined. A beverage was presented to Britannicus, after having been tasted, too hot to be drunk; to cool it, a little cold water was poured in, and this cold water contained the poison. No sooner had the prince tasted it than he fell lifeless. The guests were alarmed; some rose to fly; but those who clearly understood it all sat still, their eyes fixed on Nero, who quietly

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\* VAN HASELT: *Handbuch der Gifftohre, aus dem Holländischen von J. B. Hasekt*. 1862.

assured them that it was only an attack of the epileptic fits to which Britannicus was subject, and that it would soon be over. "After a while the gaiety of the banquet was resumed: *post breve silentium repetita convivii letitia.*" Britannicus was hastily buried the next day. According to Dion Cassius the face of the corpse had become quite black from the poison; to conceal this Nero whitened it with chalk, but the falling rain washed away this chalk and disclosed the crime which had thus clumsily been concealed. As for Locusta, she was not only rewarded with a free pardon and a grant of land, but "Nero placed some disciples with her to be instructed in her art!"

This is the story. The first remark which Science suggests is that the sudden death of Britannicus may very probably have been due to epilepsy, but *cannot* have been due to poison, since there was no poison known to the ancients capable of such instantaneous effects. In our own days the only poisons known to take effect in a few seconds are prussic acid, oxalic acid, strychnine, woorara, and the venom of certain snakes; and these were not known in Rome. Aconite, which on good grounds is believed to have been a common poison employed in Rome, requires from one to three *hours* to produce fatal effects; and the majority of mineral poisons require several hours. Secondly, Science knows of no poison which instantaneously blackens the face of the victim. There are certain mineral poisons which, taken slowly, will slowly discolour the skin, but not one which, acting rapidly on the organism, rapidly betrays its presence by such discoloration.

Having dismissed Science, we now request Common Sense to step into the witness-box, and she plainly tells us that, as Nero, Locusta, and Pollio were too deeply interested in these transactions to have volunteered a confession of their acts, and as no such confession was publicly extorted from them, there is some difficulty in ascertaining from whom such circumstantial narratives were obtained, and what guarantees they offer for the truth of their narratives. Moreover, supposing it to be a fact that Locusta was pardoned, and had a grant of land—a fact which requires proof—the fiction which connects her with Nero's criminal purposes is betrayed in the mythical addition of the disciples placed with her to be instructed in her art. Had Nero been the monster he is painted, he would not have hesitated to destroy such colleagues when their work was done, and when their testimony might be dangerous.

It is thus perfectly clear that, according to any evidence now accessible, Britannicus was not poisoned, or, if he were poisoned, it was under very different circumstances from those narrated; and it is no less clear that Nero's supposed share in the murder rests on nothing but the general suspicion that he may have wished for the young man's death.

With regard to the accusation of Nero having murdered his mother, Science and Common Sense are not less conspicuously adverse to it. Suetonius assures us that thrice Nero attempted to poison Agrippina, but thrice was foiled by her having had the precaution to prepare against such

attempts by taking an antidote. To the ancient mind this was eminently credible. To moderns it is eminently ridiculous. Ancient physiology having no distinct idea of the nature of poisons, and how they affect the organism, found no difficulty in believing in the existence of an universal antidote. Modern physiology smiles when an antidote is mentioned, except as a specific remedy under certain specific conditions, and for specific poisons. To enable the reader thoroughly to understand the extent of the ancient ignorance, and the precision with which modern science limits the idea of antidotes, it is necessary to range the various known poisons under the heads of their peculiar effects on the organism. Various classifications have been proposed; the following seems to me the most serviceable.

Poisons may be ranged under three classes: 1. As *irritant*, that is to say, exaggerating the vital activity of an organ or system, by its stimulus, and thus producing a disturbance of the organic equilibrium, which may be fatal when carried beyond a certain limit. 2. As *narcotic*, that is to say, depressing the vital activity by its effects on the nervous centres, and when carried beyond a certain limit admitting of no recovery from the depression. 3. As *corrosive* or *histolytic*, that is to say, destroying the tissues with which it is in contact.

The reader perceives at once that these different effects must be produced by very different substances, and require very different substances as remedies. Each class of poisons calls for a specific class of antidotes. The wrong antidotes will either aggravate the evil, or remain inoperative. To give the right antidote it is requisite first that we know what the poison is which has been administered, and next, what the substance is which neutralizes that poison. Suppose sulphuric acid has been administered; if we know this to be the fact, either from the presence of the poison, or its bottle, or from our skill in recognizing its effect, we have mastered the initial difficulty, and one rarely to be mastered in cases of secret poisoning. Now comes the more important step of choosing the antidote: if we try brandy, or laudanum, we only increase the evil; but if we have sufficient knowledge to recognize the nature of the action which sulphuric acid effects on the tissues, namely, *corrosive*, we see at once that to annihilate its corrosive properties we must cause it to combine with some substance which will make it harmless. We know that the sulphate of lime is harmless, and we know that chalk converts sulphuric acid into this harmless compound; we therefore administer chalk, and, if not too late, we counteract the poison. Further observe, that a remedy which, when administered rapidly after the poison has been taken, will, to a great extent, counteract the effect of that poison, is no remedy when administered beforehand. The ancient idea of an antidote, which would protect a man against an anticipated attempt at poisoning, is more irrational than the idea of a healthy man protecting himself against some unknown disease by taking a medicine believed to be effective in the case of a known disease.

Such being the state of the case, the reader at once sees the preposterousness of the ancient idea of antidotes when chemistry was not in existence, and when toxicology was undreamed of; and he will perceive that when he is called upon to believe in Agrippina having fortified herself against attempts at poison by the precautionary measure of swallowing antidotes, he might as rationally believe that a man escaped the perils of drowning, fire, sunstroke, and fever, by wearing a breastplate. Agrippina could not divine what poison would be employed against her; nor could she anticipate the discoveries of chemistry by a knowledge of what substances counteracted the effects of these poisons, or rendered them inoperative.

Fiction the first having been thus exposed, let us ask why Agrippina, with the full knowledge of her son's attempts at poisoning, should not have guarded herself against him in other directions? The historians are silent on this point. They gravely narrate how, when Nero had failed with poison, he had recourse to melodramatic contrivances, such, for example, as loosening the floor over her bed-chamber, so that its fall might crush her. This also failed. She would not be crushed. Whereupon Anicetus, the naval prefect, who detested Agrippina, offered his services. Here a juryman would assuredly ask how this offer became known, and whether Anicetus had himself publicly confessed his share in the crime; or even whether he had been publicly accused of it. But History is a Muse, and is less troubled with fastidious doubts on matters of detail. She narrates, she does not undertake to prove: *scribere ad narrandum non ad probandum*. Her narrative runs thus: Anicetus constructed a vessel, which, when out at sea, was suddenly to collapse, as if by accident, and every one on board would then perish. Nero, says Tacitus, smiled at the ingenuity of the plan—*placuit solertia*; and we may smile at the credulity of the historian. The plan, with all its pleasant ingenuity, turned out an ignoble failure; the old cat was not thus to be drowned, but swam ashore, and when on *terra firma*, "as the sole means of escape was to pretend to no suspicion," she despatched Agerinus, one of her freedmen, with a message to Nero, narrating her accident, and assuring him of her escape, at the same time requesting her son not to come to her, for she needed quiet and repose. Not thus was Nero to be deceived. He knew that his attempt had been discovered; and in terror lest she should excite the wrath of senate and soldiers against him, he sent for Seneca and Burrhus. Tacitus does not pretend that these men were aware of the attempt, but he does pretend to a knowledge of what passed at the interview, and what passed in their minds, and this it is: "They both remained silent for a long while, fearing lest they should not be attended to. They also thought that Nero would perish unless his mother perished. At length Seneca asked Burrhus if the order should be given to the soldiers to put her to death. Burrhus replied that the troops were too much attached to the house of Cæsar; and he thought, therefore, that it now remained with Anicetus to execute his threats. Anicetus with alacrity begged to be per-

mitted to complete his crime (*nihil cunctatus poscit summum sceleris*). Nero joyously consented."

Here the difficult juryman, disrespectful to History, requires to know *how* Tacitus came by this knowledge. It is not the revelation which any one of the conspirators would spontaneously have made; and although both Seneca and Burrhus subsequently perished by Nero's order, neither of them accused Nero in the exasperation of their defeat. Whence then these details, so important, so precise? Nor does Tacitus stop here. He knows that Anicetus by way of pretext prepared a scene, and a very clumsy scene. When Agerinus arrived with the message from Agrippina, Anicetus threw a sword between his feet, and then pretending to have surprised him with this weapon, accused him of being an assassin sent by Agrippina. The purpose of this comedy was to make it believed, that Agrippina, on the discovery of her attempt, had committed suicide.\*

It is characteristic of the supreme disregard of probability with which these narrations are conducted, that Tacitus, immediately after expounding the secret schemes of Anicetus, and asserting, as if it were a notorious fact, that Anicetus wished the death of Agrippina to be publicly accepted as a suicide, proceeds to tell how the troops were led to the attack of Agrippina's palace by this very Anicetus, making their murderous way through the crowd which had assembled there to congratulate her on her escape from drowning. So little is the pretext of suicide attended to, that the troops force their way into her chamber, and there butcher her. "These facts," he adds, "are undisputed. Some say that Nero examined the corpse and admired its beauty; others deny this." It is pleasant to find even so faint a gleam of scepticism as this; especially when we read in Suetonius such "other circumstances which are related upon good authority" (only the authority is never given,) as that "he went to view her corpse, and, handling her limbs, disparaged some and praised others, and then called for drink. Nevertheless, he was never able to bear the pangs of conscience, though he was supported by the congratulations of the soldiers and the senate. He frequently declared that he was haunted by his mother's ghost, and persecuted by the Furies with whips and burning torches. He even attempted to soften her rage, by bringing up her ghost by magical arts." This remorse of Nero is painted by Tacitus in his Caravaggio style; but he does not claim any "good authority" for what he says, although one would be glad to know it. No historian pretends to explain how the senate and people could celebrate with magnificent rejoicings the escape of their emperor from his mother's plots; nor how they could continue to serve and flatter him, if he were openly declared himself terror-stricken by remorse. That the senate was servile is credible; but there are limits even to servility; and the moral indifference of this senate needs explanation. It is true

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\* Suetonius makes Nero drop the sword, and order the arrest of Agerinus, inventing also the story of his mother's suicide.



that Tacitus remarks on the indifference of the gods who permitted the reign of such a monster to be prolonged; and *this* is the more noticeable, because we are told in the next sentence that the gods were scandalized, and showed their wrath in prodigies: the sun was eclipsed, thunderbolts fell in all the fourteen districts of the city, and a woman gave birth to a serpent.

How are we to explain the death of Agrippina? For myself I confess an inability to shape the story in any reliable sequence of events. The evidence is wanting. All that is indisputable is that Agrippina was said by Seneca, in a letter written to the senate, to have plotted against her son, and to have committed suicide on learning that the plot had been detected. This the senate and the people believed, or pretended to believe. I think it most probable that they did believe it, and not without good grounds; for Agrippina had once before been accused of such a plot, which Nero was made to believe. It is quite possible that Agrippina was calumniated; but if Nero believed the calumny, even for a day, the senate and people may have believed it. Moreover, the character of Burrhus and of Seneca ought to have some weight with us. If they were not faultless, at least they were admirable men. To believe that they abetted the murder of a mother by her own son would require cogent evidence; and we have absolutely no evidence, positive or presumptive, on which to found such a suspicion. In conclusion, be it observed, that I am not called upon to clear up a transaction so obscurely reported, but only to point out the incredibility of the reports. Nero may, in his alarm, have ordered his mother's arrest; she may have lost her life in the struggle of resisting such an order; or may have committed suicide. In after years public rumour, never nicely discriminating, may have transformed this into a belief of Nero's having murdered her. But as to evidence, there is simply none. The narrative of historians is baseless and inept. Where so much is flagrantly absurd we may doubt if any part be true.

Let us now turn our eyes upon Rome in flames. That Britannicus died suddenly, is a fact; that he was poisoned, we have scientific reasons for disbelieving; that Nero was the poisoner is without a shadow of proof stronger than idle suspicion. But although fiction has woven its tangled threads round a nucleus of fact, there are among these threads two of some strength, namely, the motive which *might* have prompted the crime, and the presence of Nero at the fatal banquet. It is otherwise with the fiction surrounding the historical fact of Rome in flames. There is no assignable motive which can point suspicion at Nero; and he happened to be absent from Rome when the fire broke out. The silly credulity which for centuries has accepted this story, with its mythical embellishment of Nero in mad exultation at the success of his wantonness fiddling above the burning ruins, is a striking example of what will pass as history.

Suetonius gravely relates that some one having quoted a Greek verse, the meaning of which is, "After my death I care not if the world perish in flames," Nero exclaimed, "Nay, let it perish while I live." "And,"

adds the historian, "he acted accordingly; for, pretending to take offence at the ugliness of the old buildings and the narrowness of the streets, he set the city on fire; and this was done so openly that several consulars found tow and torches in the houses of his attendants, but were afraid to meddle with them. He knocked down the walls of the granaries, which were of stone, in order that the flames might spread. The fire he beheld from a tower on the top of the villa of Mæcenas, and being hugely diverted with the splendours of the flames, he sang the *Destruction of Troy* in the dress worn by him on the stage." Yet the people patiently submitted to be ruined, and thus openly mocked, not even wreaking their vengeance on the attendants!

Suetonius, in a previous chapter, has recorded of Nero that he ordered piazzas to be erected before all the houses, great and small, in order that in case of fire there might be a commanding position for extinguishing the flames; and these piazzas were constructed at his expense: so little did he disregard the interests of his subjects!

Tacitus, a graver writer, tells the story with less manifest fiction. He says that the fire was by some attributed to accident, and by others to the wickedness of Nero; adding, "Nero at that time was at Antium, and only returned to Rome on the day when the flames approached his own palace, which he had built to join the palace of Augustus with the garden of Mæcenas. This palace and all the buildings around it were burned. To console the people, wandering and houseless, he opened the Campus Martius, and the monuments of Agrippa, as well as his own gardens. Here sheds were hastily constructed to shelter the poorest. Furniture was fetched from Ostia, and the price of corn was considerably reduced."

Thus the public acts of Nero are not only those of one innocent of the imputed crime, but are those of an emperor really concerned for the misfortunes of his people. It is quite *possible* that such acts may have been mere hypocritical attempts to disarm suspicion; and if the crime were proven, or even probable, such an interpretation might pass. But what evidence, what probability is there, to justify such an accusation? The vague rumours of an exasperated people. How *these* arise, and how supremely they dispense with evidence, need not be told. Have we not in our own time known the famine in Ireland boldly assigned to the wrath of heaven because the words *Defensio Fidei* accidentally were omitted in a new issue of silver coin? and this accusation proceeding, not from ignorant and turbulent mobs, but from the ignorant and bigoted "religious world," as it unjustifiably calls itself.

Jurymen accustomed to deliver verdicts in cases brought by Fire Insurance Offices must know the kind of evidence which they demand, before they believe that a fraudulent tradesman has set fire to his own premises. I ask them if they can see *anything* of this kind in the accusation against Nero? Without demanding the completeness of circumstantial evidence which would coerce their verdict against a living man, I simply ask whether there is *any* evidence against Nero? All that

historians have produced has been given in the foregoing narrative; its value may now be estimated.

The last crime to be noticed here is the murder of his wife. Suetonius assures us that he thrice attempted to strangle Octavia, and having failed in these attempts, divorced her; but Suetonius omits to explain how so sanguinary a tyrant should so easily have been baffled, or why he did not divorce her at once. His next wife, Poppæa, when about to become a mother, he killed with a kick, "only because she took the liberty of chiding him for coming home late."

I waive the discussion of all the other crimes, merely noting by the way that Nero, on the very testimony of his accusers, was singularly free from cruelty, saving many whom the senate would have destroyed. In those turbulent days he had many times to order the execution of conspirators—some of these were very possibly innocent; but we read of no such wholesale slaughter as is recorded of Augustus, who in one day put to death three hundred senators and nobles. And does not Suetonius record the public act of interdicting that the gladiators should be killed, in the spectacle which he gave? Even the criminals were not suffered to be butchered: *neminem occidit, ne noxiorum quidem*. No one accuses Nero of hypocrisy, yet we are told that when a warrant for execution was brought to him for signature he sighed, and exclaimed, "Would I had never learned to write!" When Silius was condemned, the senate wished to involve his son in the accusation; but Nero "interfered, considering the vengeance ample."

Indeed were it my purpose to prove historically that Nero, so far from being a monster, was a kind, gentle, and in many respects admirable ruler, I could without difficulty cite testimonies from his accusers which would somewhat stagger the reader; the more so because such testimonies, referring to public acts, always less open to question than private motives, would carry with them peculiar significance. But such is not my purpose. I distrust the evidence all round. At any rate I am not disposed to award that confidence to the narratives of his virtues which I withhold from the narratives of his crimes. Writers so demonstrably untrustworthy on many points, where their statements are explicit, forfeit our trust on all.

All that is thoroughly reliable is the fact that a tradition of Nero's infamy existed, and was unhesitatingly accepted: a tradition all the more noticeable since it was coupled with one which made his early years of brilliant promise, so that Trajan in after days expressed the wish that his whole reign might rival the splendour of Nero's commencement. That he was once beloved by the Roman people is undisputed; how came he to forfeit that regard? how came he to leave a name surpassing in infamy even that of Caligula or Tiberius? The adage assures us that "where there is smoke there is fire;" shall we try and penetrate the wreathing columns of smoke, and reach the fiery embers in this case? It cannot, unhappily, be done with any assurance of success, for no amount of

patient investigation will recover any trustworthy evidence. All must be conjectural, and the conjectures rest upon rumours, anecdotes, unverified assertions. Nevertheless, dealing with such evidence as at present exists, a sufficiently intelligible and credible account may be elicited. This I proceed to arrange, warning the reader of its conjectural character.

Granting, as we may, the probability of great self-indulgent licentiousness in a young man placed in so exceptional a position of power—a position dangerous to the highest virtue, from the absence of all restraints on the caprices of will and passion, except such restraints as issue from a high moral severity—a position full of temptations and of opportunities, capable of maddening an inferior nature; granting, as we must, the numerous enemies created by his excesses, and even by his very generousities, which would raise extravagant hopes in all related to those he favoured, and corresponding exasperation in all whom he passed over, we have an initial probability in supposing that the reputation of such an emperor could only be rescued from contempt or infamy by conspicuous glory; unless he flattered the imaginations, or strikingly advanced the interests of his people, he would inevitably incur their scorn or hatred. Most of the Roman emperors suffered from this cause. If Nero suffered more than others who were equally if not more criminal, it was, I imagine, because he for the first time inflicted an unpardonable outrage on the Roman pride. It is not easy for us, in our democratic age, to realize the feeling of sanctity which surrounded the imperial purple. Then it could be truly said, that there was a divinity to hedge a king. We are so far removed from such a mental condition that it costs a considerable effort to believe that the Emperor was really held as a God, not simply in the apotheosis which succeeded his reign, but actually during his lifetime. Yet it is necessary that we should make this effort, it is necessary we should vividly realize to ourselves the fact that the emperor was, not simply in flattering titles, but in honest belief, invested with a divine sanctity, a sanctity surpassing that which now invests the Papal throne, if we would understand the deep offence given to all that was grave and dignified in Rome by those wanton and undignified displays of personal and petty vanity with which Nero disgraced the purple. These vanities, which in a private man would have elicited no more than a contemptuous smile, in a senator would have been offensive, in an emperor were outrages.

Something of what Rome felt may be imagined if we picture to ourselves the feeling of our own aristocracy, had Lord Byron, not content with "putting on the gloves" with Jackson, so far yielded to an inordinate desire for display as to have actually entered the ring and fought Tom Crib for the champion's belt; or, better still, if we imagine the uproar resounding through all the counties of Great Britain, if an agile archbishop, prouder of his agility than of his learning, should publicly exhibit his skill on the tight rope and trapeze. It would be of no use for muscular Christians to urge that muscular agility was in itself admirable, and that

there was nothing contrary to virtue and piety in the tight-rope and trapeze; so vehement a shock to all our sentiments of the becoming, and so wanton a disregard of all the dignities and gravities of office, would prepare the mind of the people to credit any stories, however infamous, which malice might circulate against such an archbishop. Showing so conspicuous a disregard to all the decencies of public life, he would be held capable of far greater disregard of the moralities. If vanity could make him thus overstep the rigid limits of propriety, how much more irresistible would be the impulses of passion? Thus would men argue; not very logically, perhaps, but with a coercive force no arguments could withstand.

Now something of this must have filled the minds of the Romans when in their astonished wrath they saw Nero so far carried away by his desire for applause, that not content with wasting his time and degrading his manhood by the composition of feeble verses, the twanging of lyres, and the driving of chariots—the occupations of slaves—he must also degrade his sacred office, and step from the throne upon the public stage, to court the plaudits of the populace like a vile histrion. It is not long since even in Europe the actor was an object of social scorn; and still the law brands him as a vagabond, although society has learned to respect him as a citizen. In Rome the degradation of *all* artists was such as we can with difficulty conceive. To play on the lyre, and to dance, were held no less unworthy of an aristocracy, than juggling and tumbling in our days. And it is curious to notice the emphasis given to this feeling in Juvenal's indignant comparison of Nero to Orestes. Both were matricides, but Orestes was honourable and Nero execrable. Why? Not because the mother of Orestes was notoriously guilty, but because "*he never sang upon the stage, nor wrote the poem of the Troics,*"—two crimes of Nero. "These are the works and these the acts of a noble ruler delighting to prostitute his rank by disgraceful exhibitions of himself on a foreign stage."

*Hæc opera, atque hæc sunt generalis principis artes  
Gaudentis fœdè peregrina ad pulpita cantu  
Prostituit.*

It is, therefore, perfectly intelligible, though at first sight ludicrous, that when Julius Vindex raised the standard of revolt, his fiercest accusation against the emperor, and one which justified the soldiery in deposing him from the throne he disgraced, was that of being "a miserable harper." And Tacitus, speaking of Nero's practice of singing songs to the harp during his banquets—because it was the custom of ancient kings and chiefs—characterizes it as "not less disgraceful (*non minus factum*) than driving a chariot in public."

Such being the state of Roman feeling, we can be at no loss to discover the cause of the senate and people having learned to despise and detest an emperor who could wantonly outrage it by his displays of

vanity. I am not disposed to believe all the stories told respecting these displays. Gossip and exaggeration have doubtless been at work here; and the excesses of his vanity may be as open to doubt as the excesses of his criminality. But they were believed; and the belief is sufficient to account for his reputation. The fact of his public exhibitions scarcely admits of question; and it is a fact which furnishes us with two keys: one is the revelation of Nero's weakness in being unable to resist the impulses of vanity, however unbecoming, and this weakness may not unreasonably be supposed to have vitiated his private life, giving him up to manifold indulgences; the other key is the profound disgust and dishonouring hatred which it would inspire in all the graver minds, who saw the imperial purple thus degraded.

Here ends my conjecture. The less disputable portion of this essay stands on other ground. Whether we choose to believe that the traditions about Nero imply great substantive criminality in him, or only mythical exaggerations, I hope it has been made clear that the four capital crimes with which his memory is loaded, not only want every vestige of rational evidence, so that never for one moment could the accusations have been brought into a court of law, but are signally incredible, and never could have been admitted even into the laxities of history, otherwise than as rumours, had it not been for the causes which repress historical scepticism and make men, who are vigilant in jurisprudence and science, blindly credulous in history.

Finally, let me repeat that the object of this essay is less the vindication of Nero's character, than an appeal to the common sense of mankind to be vigilant in its demands of *evidence*, when called upon either in history, or in the gossip circulated about living men, to accept statements affecting character and motives. What constitutes sufficient evidence may, in many cases, be open to ~~debate~~; but every man can exercise the preliminary caution of asking ~~what is~~ the evidence upon which he is called upon to believe a statement; and he can then judge whether he is giving his assent to unauthenticated rumours, born of malice, and exaggerated by thoughtlessness, or to statements which carry with them at least the guarantee of direct testimony, the value of which may be estimated.

G. H. L.

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## Romola.

(CHAPTER LXVIII.)

### ROMOLA'S WAKING.



ROMOLA in her boat passed from dreaming into long deep sleep, and then again from deep sleep into busy dreaming, till at last she felt herself stretching out her arms in the court of the Bargello, where the flickering flames of the tapers seemed to get stronger and stronger till the dark scene was blotted out with light. Her eyes opened, and she saw it was the light of morning. Her boat was lying still in a little creek: on her right hand lay the speckless sapphire-blue of the Mediterranean; on her left one of those scenes which were and still are repeated again and again, like a sweet rhythm, on the shores of that loveliest sea.

In a deep curve of the mountains lay a breadth of green land, curtained by gentle tree-shadowed slopes leaning towards the rocky heights. Up these slopes might be seen here and there, gleaming between the tree-tops, a pathway leading to a little irregular mass of building that seemed to have clambered in a hasty way up the mountain-side, and taken a difficult stand there for the sake

of showing the tall belfry as a sight of beauty to the scattered and clustered houses of the village below. The rays of the newly-risen sun fell obliquely on the westward horn of this crescent-shaped nook: all else lay in dewy shadow. No sound came across the stillness; the very waters seemed to have curved themselves there for rest.

The delicious sun-rays fell on Romola and thrilled her gently like a caress. She lay motionless, hardly watching the scene; rather, feeling simply the presence of peace and beauty. While we are still in our youth there can always come, in our early waking, moments when mere passive existence is itself a Lethe, when the exquisiteness of subtle indefinite sensation creates a bliss which is without memory and without desire. As the soft warmth penetrated Romola's young limbs, as her eyes rested on this sequestered luxuriance, it seemed that the agitating past had glided away like that dark scene in the Bargello, and that the afternoon dreams of her girlhood had really come back to her. For a minute or two the oblivion was untroubled; she did not even think that she could rest here for ever, she only felt that she rested. Then she became distinctly conscious that she was lying in the boat which had been bearing her over the waters all through the night. Instead of bringing her to death, it had been the gently lulling cradle of a new life. And in spite of her evening despair she was glad that the morning had come to her again glad to think that she was resting in the familiar sunlight rather than in the unknown regions of death. *Could* she not rest here? No sound from Florence would reach her. Already oblivion was troubled; from behind the golden haze were piercing domes and towers and walls, parted by a river and enclosed by the green hills.

She rose from her reclining posture and sat up in the boat, willing, if she could, to resist the rush of thoughts that urged themselves along with the conjecture how far the boat had carried her. Why need she mind? This was a sheltered nook where there were simple villagers who would not harm her. For a little while, at least, she might rest and resolve on nothing. Presently she would go and get some bread and milk, and then she would nestle in the green quiet, and feel that there was a pause in her life. She turned to watch the crescent-shaped valley, that she might get back the soothing sense of peace and beauty which she had felt in her first waking.

She had not been in this attitude of contemplation more than a few minutes when across the stillness there came a piercing cry; not a brief cry, but continuous and more and more intense. Romola felt sure it was the cry of a little child in distress that no one came to help. She started up and put one foot on the side of the boat ready to leap on to the beach; but she paused there and listened. the mother of the child must be near, the cry must soon cease. But it went on, and drew Romola so irresistibly, seeming the more piteous to her for the sense of peace which had preceded it, that she jumped on to the beach and walked many paces before she knew what direction she would take. The cry, she thought, came

from some rough garden growth many yards on her right hand, where she saw a half-ruined hovel. She climbed over a low broken stone fence, and made her way across patches of weedy green crops and ripe but neglected corn. The cry grew plainer, and, convinced that she was right, she hastened towards the hovel; but even in that hurried walk she felt an oppressive change in the air as she left the sea behind. Was there some taint lurking amongst the green luxuriance that had seemed such an inviting shelter from the heat of the coming day? She could see the opening into the hovel now, and the cry was darting through her like a pain. The next moment her foot was within the doorway, but the sight she beheld in the sombre light arrested her with a shock of awe and horror. On the straw, with which the floor was scattered, lay three dead bodies, one of a tall man, one of a girl about eight years old, and one of a young woman whose long black hair was being clutched and pulled by a living child—the child that was sending forth the piercing cry. Romola's experience in the haunts of death and disease made thought and action prompt: she lifted the little living child, and in trying to soothe it on her bosom, still bent to look at the bodies and see if they were really dead. The strongly marked type of race in their features and their peculiar garb made her conjecture that they were Spanish or Portuguese Jews, who had perhaps been put ashore and abandoned there by rapacious sailors, to whom their property remained as a prey. Such things were happening continually to Jews compelled to abandon their homes by the Inquisition: the cruelty of greed thrust them from the sea, and the cruelty of superstition thrust them back to it.

"But surely," thought Romola, "I shall find some woman in the village whose mother's heart will not let her refuse to tend this helpless child—if the real mother is indeed dead."

This doubt remained, because while the man and girl looked emaciated and also showed signs of having been long dead, the woman seemed to have been hardier, and had not quite lost the robustness of her form. Romola, kneeling, was about to lay her hand on the heart; but as she lifted the piece of yellow woollen drapery that lay across the bosom, she saw the purple spots which marked the familiar pestilence. Then it struck her that if the villagers knew of this, she might have more difficulty than she had expected in getting help from them; they would perhaps shrink from her with that child in her arms. But she had money to offer them, and they would not refuse to give her some goats' milk in exchange for it.

She set out at once towards the village, her mind filled now with the effort to soothe the little dark creature, and with wondering how she should win some woman to be good to it. She could not help hoping a little in a certain awe she had observed herself to inspire, when she appeared, unknown and unexpected, in her religious dress. As she passed across a breadth of cultivated ground, she noticed, with wonder, that little patches of corn mingled with the other crops had been left to over-ripe—

ness untouched by the sickle, and that golden apples and dark figs lay rotting on the weedy ground. There were grassy spaces within sight, but no cow, or sheep, or goat. The stillness began to have something fearful in it to Romola; she hurried along towards the thickest cluster of houses, where there would be the most life to appeal to on behalf of the helpless life she carried in her arms. But she had picked up two figs, and bit little ~~from~~ from the sweet pulp to still the child with.

She entered between two lines of dwellings. It was time that villagers should have been stirring long ago, but not a soul was in sight. The air was becoming more and more oppressive, laden, it seemed, with some horrible impurity. There was a door open; she looked in, and saw grim emptiness. Another open door; and through that she saw a man lying dead with all his garments on, his head lying athwart a spade handle, and an earthenware cruse in his hand, as if he had fallen suddenly.

Romola felt horror taking possession of her. Was she in a village of the unburied dead? She wanted to listen if there were any faint sound, but the child cried out afresh when she ceased to feed it, and the cry filled her ears. At last she saw a figure crawling slowly out of a house, and soon sinking back in a sitting posture against the wall. She hastened towards the figure; it was a young woman in fevered anguish, and she, too, held a pitcher in her hand. As Romola approached her she did not start; the one need was too absorbing for any other idea to impress itself on her.

"Water! get me water!" she said, with a moaning utterance.

Romola stooped to take the pitcher, and said gently in her ear, "You shall have water; can you point towards the well?"

The hand was lifted towards the more distant end of the little street, and Romola set off at once with as much speed as she could use under the difficulty of carrying the pitcher as well as feeding the child. But the little one was getting more content as the morsels of sweet pulp were repeated, and ceased to distress her with its cry, so that she could give a less distracted attention to the objects around her.

The well lay twenty yards or more beyond the end of the street, and as Romola was approaching it her eyes were directed to the opposite green slope immediately below the church. High up, on a patch of grass between the trees, she had descried a cow and a couple of goats, and she tried to trace a line of path that would lead her close to that cheering sight, when once she had done her errand to the well. Occupied in this way, she was not aware that she was very near the well, and that some one approaching it on the other side had fixed a pair of astonished eyes upon her.

Romola certainly presented a sight which, at that moment and in that place, could hardly have been seen without some pausing and palpitation. With her gaze fixed intently on the distant slope, the long lines of her thick grey garment giving a gliding character to her rapid walk, her hair rolling backward and illuminated on the left side by the sun-rays, the little

olive baby on her right arm now looking out with jet black eyes, she might well startle that youth of fifteen, accustomed to swing the censur in the presence of a Madonna less fair and marvellous than this.

"She carries a pitcher in her hand—to fetch water for the sick. It is the Holy Mother, come to take care of the people who have the pestilence."

It was a sight of awe: she would, perhaps, be angry with those who fetched water for themselves only. The youth flung down his vessel in terror, and Romola, aware now of some one near her, saw the black and white figure fly as if for dear life towards the slope she had just been contemplating. But remembering the parched sufferer, she half filled her pitcher quickly and hastened back.

Entering the house to look for a small cup, she saw salt meat and meal: there were no signs of want in the dwelling. With nimble movements she seated baby on the ground, and lifted a cup of water to the sufferer, who drank eagerly and then closed her eyes and leaned her head backward, seeming to give herself up to the sense of relief. Presently she opened her eyes, and, looking at Romola, said languidly,—

"Who are you?"

"I came over the sea," said Romola. "I only came this morning. Are all the people dead in these houses?"

"I think they are all ill now—all that are not dead. My father and my sister lie dead upstairs, and there is no one to bury them: and soon I shall die."

"Not so, I hope," said Romola. "I am come to take care of you. I am used to the pestilence; I am not afraid. But there must be some left who are not ill. I saw a youth running towards the mountain when I went to the well."

"I cannot tell. When the pestilence came, a great many people went away, and drove off the cows and goats. Give me more water!"

Romola, suspecting that if she followed the direction of the youth's flight, she should find some men and women who were still healthy and able, determined to seek them out at once, that she might at least win them to take care of the child, and leave her free to come back and see how many living needed help, and how many dead needed burial. She trusted to her powers of persuasion to conquer the aid of the timorous, when once she knew what was to be done.

Promising the sick woman to come back to her, she lifted the dark bantling again, and set off towards the slope. She felt no burden of choice on her now, no longing for death. She was thinking how she would go to the other sufferers, as she had gone to that fevered woman.

But, with the child on her arm, it was not so easy to her as usual to walk up a slope, and it seemed a long while before the winding path took her near the cow and the goats. She was beginning herself to feel faint from heat, hunger, and thirst, and as she reached a double turning, she paused to consider whether she would not wait near the cow, which some one was likely to come and milk soon, rather than toil up to the church

before she had taken any rest. Raising her eyes to measure the steep distance, she saw peeping between the boughs, not more than five yards off, a broad round face, watching her attentively, and lower down the black skirt of a priest's garment, and a hand grasping a bucket. She stood mutely observing, and the face, too, remained motionless. Romola had often witnessed the overpowering force of dread in cases of pestilence, and was cautious.

Raising her voice in a tone of gentle pleading, she said, "I came over the sea. I am hungry, and so is the child. Will you not give us some milk?"

Romola had divined part of the truth, but she had not divined that preoccupation of the priest's mind which charged her words with a strange significance. Only a little while ago, the young acolyte had brought word to the Padre that he had seen the Holy Mother with the Babe, fetching water for the sick: she was as tall as the cypresses, and had a light about her head, and she looked up at the church. The *pievano*\* had not listened with entire belief: he had been more than fifty years in the world without having any vision of the Madonna, and he thought the boy might have misinterpreted the unexpected appearance of a villager. But he had been made uneasy, and before venturing to come down and milk his cow, he had repeated many Aves. The *pievano*'s conscience tormented him a little: he trembled at the pestilence, but he also trembled at the thought of the mild-faced Mother, conscious that that Invisible Mercy might demand something more of him than prayers and "Hails." In this state of mind—unable to banish the image the boy had raised of the Mother with the glory about her tending the sick—the *pievano* had come down to milk his cow, and had suddenly caught sight of Romola pausing at the parted way. Her pleading words, with their strange refinement of tone and accent, instead of being explanatory, had a preternatural sound for him. Yet he did not quite believe he saw the Holy Mother: he was in a state of alarmed hesitation. If anything miraculous were happening, he felt there was no strong presumption that the miracle would be in his favour. He dared not run away; he dared not advance.

"Come down," said Romola, after a pause. "Do not fear. Fear rather to deny food to the hungry when they ask you."

A moment after the boughs were parted, and the complete figure of a thick-set priest, with a broad, harmless face, his black frock much worn and soiled, stood, bucket in hand, looking at her timidly, and still keeping aloof as he took the path towards the cow in silence.

Romola followed him and watched him without speaking again, as he seated himself against the tothered cow, and, when he had nervously drawn some milk, gave it to her in a brass cup he carried with him in the bucket. As Romola put the cup to the lips of the eager child, and afterwards drank some milk herself, the Padre observed her from his wooden stool with a timidity that changed its character a little. He recognized the

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\* Parish-priest.



Hebrew baby, he was certain that he had a substantial woman before him; but there was still something strange and unaccountable in Romola's presence in this spot, and the Padre had a presentiment that things were going to change with him. Moreover, that Hebrew baby was terribly associated with the dread of pestilence.

Nevertheless, when Romola smiled at the little one sucking its own milky lips, and stretched out the brass cup again, saying, "Give us more, good father," he obeyed less nervously than before.

Romola, on her side, was not unobservant; and when the second supply of milk had been drunk, she looked down at the round-headed man, and said with mild decision,

"And now tell me, father, how this pestilence came, and why you let your people die without the sacraments, and lie unburied. For I am come over the sea to help those who are left alive—and you, too, will help them now."

He told her the story of the pestilence: and while he was telling it, the youth, who had fled before, had come peeping and advancing gradually, till at last he stood and watched the scene from behind a neighbouring bush.

Three families of Jews, twenty souls in all, had been put ashore many weeks ago, some of them already ill of the pestilence. The villagers, said the priest, had of course refused to give shelter to the miscreants, otherwise than in a distant hovel, and under heaps of straw. But when the strangers had died of the plague, and some of the people had thrown the bodies into the sea, the sea had brought them back again in a great storm, and everybody was smitten with terror. A grave was dug, and the bodies were buried, but then the pestilence attacked the Christians, and the greater number of the villagers went away over the mountain, driving away their few cattle, and carrying provisions. The priest had not fled; he had stayed and prayed for the people, and he had prevailed on the youth Jacopo to stay with him; but he confessed that a mortal terror of the plague had taken hold of him, and he had not dared to go down into the valley.

"You will fear no longer, father," said Romola, in a tone of encouraging authority; "you will come down with me, and we will see who is living, and we will look for the dead to bury them. I have walked about for months where the pestilence was, and see, I am strong. Jacopo will come with us," she added, motioning to the peeping lad, who came slowly from behind his defensive bush, as if invisible threads were dragging him.

"Come, Jacopo," said Romola again, smiling at him, "you will carry the child for me. See! your arms are strong, and I am tired."

That was a dreadful proposal to Jacopo, and to the priest also; but they were both under a peculiar influence forcing them to obey. The suspicion that Romola was a supernatural form was dissipated, but their minds were filled instead with the more effective sense that she was a human being whom God had sent over the sea to command them.

"Now we will carry down the milk," said Romola, "and see if any one wants it."

So they went all together down the slope, and that morning the sufferers saw help come to them in their despair. There were hardly more than a score alive in the whole valley; but all of these were comforted, most were saved, and the dead were buried.

From this way days, weeks, and months passed with Romola, till the men were digging and sowing again, till the women smiled at her as they carried their great vases on their heads to the well, and the Hebrew baby was a tottering tumbling Christian, Benedetto by name, having been baptized in the church on the mountain side. But by that time she herself was suffering from the fatigue and languor that must come after a continuous strain on mind and body. She had taken for her dwelling one of the houses abandoned by their owners, standing a little aloof from the village street, and here on a thick heap of clean straw—a delicious bed for those who do not dream of down—she felt glad to lie still through most of the daylight hours, taken care of along with the little Benedetto by a woman whom the pestilence had widowed.

Every day the Padre and Jacopo and the small flock of surviving villagers paid their visit to this cottage to see the blessed Lady, and to bring her of their best as an offering—honey, fresh cakes, eggs, and polenta. It was a sight they could none of them forget, a sight they all told of in their old age—how the sweet and sainted Lady with her fair face, her golden hair, and her brown eyes that had a blessing in them, lay weary with her labours after she had been sent over the sea to help them in their extremity, and how the queer little black Benedetto used to crawl about the straw by her side and want everything that was brought to her, and she always gave him a bit of what she took, and told them if they loved her they must be good to Benedetto.

Many legends were afterwards told in that valley about the blessed Lady who came over the sea, but they were legends by which all who heard might know that in times gone by a woman had done beautiful loving deeds there, rescuing those who were ready to perish.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### HOMeward.

In those silent wintry hours when Romola lay resting from her weariness, her mind, travelling back over the past, and gazing across the undefined distance of the future, saw all objects from a new position. Her experience since the moment of her waking in the boat had come to her with as strong an effect as that of the fresh seal on the dissolving wax. She had felt herself without bonds, without motive; sinking in mere egoistic complaining that life could bring her no content; feeling a

right to say, "I am tired of life; I want to die." That thought had sobbed within her as she fell asleep, but from the moment after her waking when the cry had drawn her, she had not even reflected, as she used to do in Florence, that she was glad to live because she could lighten sorrow—she had simply lived, with so energetic an impulse to share the life around her, to answer the call of need and do the work which cried aloud to be done, that the reasons for living, enduring, labouring, never took the form of argument.

The experience was like a new baptism to Romola. In Florence the simpler relations of the human being to his fellow-men had been complicated for her with all the special ties of marriage, the State, and religious discipleship, and when these had disappointed her trust the shock seemed to have shaken her aloof from life and stunned her sympathy. But now she said, "It was mere baseness in me to desire death. If everything else is doubtful, this suffering that I can help is certain; if the glory of the cross is an illusion, the sorrow is only the truer. While the strength is in my arm I will stretch it out to the fainting; while the light visits my eyes they shall seek the forsaken."

And then the past arose with a fresh appeal to her. Her work in this green valley was done, and the emotions that were disengaged from the people immediately around her rushed back into the old deep channels of use and affection. That rare possibility of self-contemplation which comes in any complete severance from our wonted life made her judge herself as she had never done before: the compunction which is inseparable from a sympathetic nature keenly alive to the possible experience of others, began to stir in her with growing force. She questioned the justness of her own conclusions, of her own deeds: she had been rash, arrogant, always dissatisfied that others were not good enough, while she herself had not been true to what her soul had once recognized as the best. She began to condemn her flight: after all, it had been cowardly self-care; the grounds on which Savonarola had once taken her back were truer, deeper than the grounds she had had for her second flight. How could she feel the needs of others and not feel above all the needs of the nearest?

But then came reaction against such self-reproach. The memory of her life with Tito, of the conditions which made their real union impossible, while their external union imposed a set of false duties on her which were essentially the concealment and sanctioning of what her mind revolted from, told her that flight had been her only resource. All minds, except such as are delivered from doubt by dulness of sensibility, must be subject to this recurring conflict where the many-twisted conditions of life have forbidden the fulfilment of a bond. For in strictness there is no replacing of relations: the presence of the new does not nullify the failure and breach of the old. Life has lost its perfection: it has been maimed; and until the wounds are quite scarred, conscience continually casts backward doubting glances.

Romola shrank with dread from the renewal of her proximity to Tito, and yet she was uneasy that she had put herself out of reach of knowing what was his fate—uneasy that the moment might yet come when he would be in misery and need her. There was still a thread of pain within her, testifying to those words of Fra Girolamo, that she could not cease to be a wife. Could anything utterly cease for her that had once mingled itself with the current of her heart's blood?

Florence, and all her life there, had come back to her like hunger; her feelings could not go wandering after the possible and the vague: their living fibre was fed with the memory of familiar things. And the thought that she had divided herself from them for ever became more and more importunate in these hours that were unfilled with action. What if Fra Girolamo had been wrong? What if the life of Florence was a web of inconsistencies? Was she, then, something higher, that she should shake the dust from off her feet, and say, "This world is not good enough for me?" If she had been really higher, she would not so easily have lost all her trust.

Her indignant grief for her godfather had no longer complete possession of her, and her sense of debt to Savonarola was recovering predominance. Nothing that had come, or was to come, could do away with the fact that there had been a great inspiration in him which had waked a new life in her. Who, in all her experience, could demand the same gratitude from her as he? His errors—might they not bring calamities?

She could not rest. She hardly knew whether it was her strength returning with the budding leaves that made her active again, or whether it was her eager longing to get nearer Florence. She did not imagine herself daring to enter Florence, but the desire to be near enough to learn what was happening there urged itself with a strength that excluded all other purposes.

And one March morning the people in the valley were gathered together to see the blessed Lady depart. Jacopo had fetched a mule for her, and was going with her over the mountains. The Padre, too, was going with her to the nearest town, that he might help her in learning the safest way by which she might get to Pistoja. Her store of trinkets and money, untouched in this valley, was abundant for her needs.

If Romola had been less drawn by the longing that was taking her away, it would have been a hard moment for her when she walked along the village street for the last time, while the Padre and Jacopo, with the mule, were awaiting her near the well. Her steps were hindered by the wailing people, who knelt and kissed her hands, then clung to her skirts and kissed the grey folds, crying, "Ah, why will you go, when the good season is beginning and the crops will be plentiful? Why will you go?"

"Do not be sorry," said Romola, "you are well now, and I shall remember you. I must go and see if my own people want me."

"Ah, yes, if they have the pestilence!"

"Look at us again, Madonna!"

"Yes, yes, we will be good to the little Benedetto!"

At last Romola mounted her mule, but a vigorous screaming from Benedetto as he saw her turn from him in this new position, was an excuse for all the people to follow her and insist that he must ride on the mule's neck to the foot of the slope.

The parting must come at last, but as Romola turned continually before she passed out of sight, she saw the little flock lingering to catch the last waving of her hand.

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## CHAPTER LXX.

### MEETING AGAIN.

ON the fourteenth of April Romola was once more within the walls of Florence. Unable to rest at Pistoja, where contradictory reports reached her about the Trial by Fire, she had gone on to Pisto; and was beginning to think that she should be drawn on to Florence in spite of dread, when she encountered that monk of San Spirito who had been her godfather's confessor. From him she learned the full story of Savonarola's arrest, and of her husband's death. This Augustinian monk had been in the stream of people who had followed the waggon with its awful burden into the Piazza, and he could tell her what was generally known in Florence—that Tito had escaped from an assaulting mob by leaping into the Arno, but had been murdered on the bank by an old man who had long had an enmity against him. But Romola understood the catastrophe as no one else did. Of Savonarola the monk told her, in that tone of unfavourable prejudice which was usual in the Black Brethren (Fрати Neri) towards the brother who showed white under his black, that he had confessed himself a deceiver of the people.

Romola paused no longer. That evening she was in Florence, sitting in agitated silence under the exclamations of joy and wailing, mingled with exuberant narrative, which were poured into her ears by Monna Brigida, who had retrograded to false hair in Romola's absence, but now drew it off again and declared she would not mind being grey, if her dear child would stay with her.

Romola was too deeply moved by the main events which she had known before coming to Florence, to be wrought upon by the doubtful gossiping details added in Brigida's narrative. The tragedy of her husband's death, of Fra Girolamo's confession of duplicity under the coercion of torture, left her hardly any power of apprehending minor circumstances. All the mental activity she could exert under that load of awe-stricken grief, was absorbed by two purposes which must supersede every other; to try and see Savonarola, and to learn what had become of Tessa and the children.

"Tell me, cousin," she said abruptly, when Monna Brigida's tongue

had run quite away from troubles into projects of Romola's living with her, "has anything been seen or said since Tito's death of a young woman with two little children?"

Brigida started, rounded her eyes, and lifted up her hands.

"Cristo! no. What! was he so bad as that, my poor child? Ah, then, that was why you went away and left me word only that you went of your own free will. Well, well, if I'd known that, I shouldn't have thought you so strange and flighty. For I did say to myself, though I didn't tell anybody else, 'What was she to go away from her husband for, leaving him to mischief, only because they cut poor Bernardo's head off? She's got her father's temper,' I said, 'that's what it is.' Well, well, never scold me, child: Bardo was fierce, you can't deny it. But if you had only told me the truth, that there was a young hussey and children, I should have understood it all. Anything seen or said of her? No: and the less the better. They say enough of ill about him without that. But since that was the reason you went——"

"No, dear cousin," said Romola, interrupting her earnestly, "pray do not talk so. I wish above all things to find that young woman and her children, and to take care of them. They are quite helpless. Say nothing against it; that is the thing I shall do first of all."

"Well," said Monna Brigida, shrugging her shoulders and lowering her voice with an air of puzzled discomfiture, "if that's being a Piagnone, I've been taking peas for paternosters. Why, Fra Girolamo said as good as that widows ought not to marry again. Step in at the door and it's a sin and a shame, it seems; but come down the chimney and you're welcome. Two children—Santiddio!"

"Cousin, the poor thing has done no conscious wrong: she is ignorant of everything. I will tell you—but not now."

Early the next morning Romola's steps were directed to the house beyond San Ambrogio where she had once found Tessa; but it was as she had feared: Tessa was gone. Romola conjectured that Tito had sent her away beforehand to some spot where he had intended to join her, for she did not believe that he would willingly part with those children. It was a painful conjecture, because, if Tessa were out of Florence, there was hardly a chance of finding her, and Romola pictured the childish creature waiting and waiting at some wayside spot in wondering helpless misery. Those who lived near could tell her nothing except that old deaf Lisa had gone away a week ago with her goods, but no one knew where Tessa had gone. Romola saw no further active search open to her; for she had no knowledge that could serve as a starting-point for inquiry, and not only her innate reserve but a more noble sensitiveness made her shrink from assuming an attitude of generosity in the eyes of others by publishing Tessa's relation to Tito along with her own desire to find her. Many days passed in anxious inaction. Even under strong solicitation from other thoughts Romola found her heart palpitating if she caught sight of a pair of round brown legs, or of a short woman in the contadina dress.

She never for a moment told herself that it was heroism or exalted charity in her to seek these beings; she needed something that she was bound specially to care for; she yearned to clasp the children and to make them love her. This at least would be some sweet result, for others as well as herself, from all her past sorrow. It appeared there was much property of Tito's to which she had a claim; but she distrusted the cleanliness of that money, and she had determined to make it all over to the State, except so much as was equal to the price of her father's library. This would be enough for the modest support of Tessa and the children. But Monna Brigida threw such planning into the background by clamorously insisting that Romola must live with her and never forsake her till she had seen her safe in paradise—else why had she persuaded her to turn Piagnone?—and if Romola wanted to rear other people's children, she, Monna Brigida, must rear them too. Only they must be found first.

Romola felt the full force of that innuendo. But strong feeling unsatisfied is never without its superstition, either of hope or despair. Romola's was the superstition of hope: *somehow* she was to find that mother and the children. And at last another direction for active inquiry suggested itself. She learned that Tito had provided horses and mules to await him in San Gallo; he was therefore going to leave Florence by the gate of San Gallo, and she determined, though without much confidence in the issue, to try and ascertain from the gate-keepers if they had observed any one corresponding to the description of Tessa, with her children, to have passed the gates before the morning of the ninth of April. Walking along the Via San Gallo, and looking watchfully about her through her long widow's veil, lest she should miss any object that might aid her, she descried Bratti chaffering with a customer. That roaming man, she thought, might aid her: she would not mind talking of Tessa to him. But as she put aside her veil and crossed the street towards him, she saw something hanging from the corner of his basket which made her heart leap with a much stronger hope.

"Bratti, my friend," she said abruptly, "where did you get that necklace?"

"Your servant, madonna," said Bratti, looking round at her very deliberately, his mind not being subject to surprise. "It's a necklace worth money, but I shall get little by it, for my heart's too tender for a trader's; I've promised to keep it in pledge."

"Pray tell me where you got it:—from a little woman named Tessa, is it not true?"

"Ah! if you know her," said Bratti, "and would redeem it of me at a small profit, and give it her again, you'd be doing a charity, for she cried at parting with it—you'd have thought she was running into a brook. It's a small profit I'll charge you. You shall have it for a florin, for I don't like to be hard-hearted."

"Where is she?" said Romola, giving him the money, and unclasping the necklace from the basket in joyful agitation.

"Outside the gate there, at the other end of the Borgo, at old Sibilla Manetti's: anybody will tell you which is the house."

Romola went along with winged feet, blessing that incident of the Carnival which had made her learn by heart the appearance of this necklace. Soon she was at the house she sought. The young woman and the children were in the inner room—were to have been fetched away a fortnight ago and more—had no money, only their clothes, to pay a poor widow with for their food and lodging. But since Madonna knew them—Romola waited to hear no more, but opened the door.

Tessa was seated on the low bed: her crying had passed into tearless sobs, and she was looking with sad blank eyes at the two children, who were playing in an opposite corner—Lillo covering his head with his skirt and roaring at Ninna to frighten her, then peeping out again to see how she bore it. The door was a little behind Tessa, and she did not turn round when it opened, thinking it was only the old woman: expectation was no longer alive. Romola had thrown aside her veil and paused a moment, holding the necklace in sight. Then she said, in that pure voice that used to cheer her father,—

"Tessa!"

Tessa started to her feet and looked round.

"See," said Romola, clasping the beads on Tessa's neck, "God has sent me to you again."

The poor thing screamed and sobbed, and clung to the arms that fastened the necklace. She could not speak. The two children came from their corner, laid hold of their mother's skirts, and looked up with wide eyes at Romola.

That day they all went home to Monna Brigida's, in the Borgo degli Albizzi. Romola had made known to Tessa by gentle degrees, that Naldo could never come to her again; not because he was cruel, but because he was dead.

"But be comforted, my Tessa," said Romola. "I am come to take care of you always. And we have got Lillo and Ninna."

Monna Brigida's mouth twitched in the struggle between her awe of Romola and the desire to speak unreasonably.

"Let be, for the present," she thought; "but it seems to me a thousand years till I tell this little contadina, who seems not to know how many fingers she's got on her hand, who Romola is. And I will tell her some day, else she'll never know her place. It's all very well for Romola; nobody will call their souls their own when she's by; but if I'm to have this puss-faced minx living in my house, she must be humble to me."

However, Monna Brigida wanted to give the children too many sweets for their supper, and confessed to Romola, the last thing before going to bed, that it would be a shame not to take care of such cherubs.

"But you must give up to me a little, Romola, about their eating, and those things. For you have never had a baby, and I had twins, only they died as soon as they were born."



## CHAPTER LXXI.

## THE CONFESSION.

WHEN Romola brought home Tessa and the children April was already near its close, and the other great anxiety on her mind had been wrought to its highest pitch by the publication in print of Fra Girolamo's Trial, or rather of the confessions drawn from him by the sixteen Florentine citizens commissioned to interrogate him. The appearance of this document, issued by order of the Signoria, had called forth such strong expressions of public suspicion and discontent, that severe measures were immediately taken for recalling it. Of course there were copies accidentally mislaid, and a second edition, *not* by order of the Signoria, was soon in the hands of eager readers.

Romola, who began to despair of ever speaking with Fra Girolamo, read this evidence again and again, desiring to judge it by some clearer light than the contradictory impressions that were taking the form of assertions in the mouths of both partisans and enemies.

In the more devout followers of Savonarola his want of constancy under torture, and his retraction of prophetic claims, had produced a consternation too profound to be at once displaced as it ultimately was by the suspicion, which soon grew into a positive datum, that any reported words of his which were in inexplicable contradiction to their faith in him, had not come from the lips of the prophet, but from the falsifying pen of Ser Ceccone, that notary of evil repute, who had made the digest of the examination. But there were obvious facts that at once threw discredit on the printed document. Was not the list of sixteen examiners half made up of the prophet's bitterest enemies? Was not the notorious Dolfo Spini one of the new Eight prematurely elected, in order to load the dice against a man whose ruin had been determined on by the party in power? It was but a murder with slow formalities that was being transacted in the Old Palace. The Signoria had resolved to drive a good bargain with the Pope and the Duke of Milan, by extinguishing the man who was as great a molestation to vicious citizens and greedy foreign tyrants as to a corrupt clergy. The Frate had been doomed beforehand, and the only question that was pretended to exist now was, whether the Republic, in return for a permission to lay a tax on ecclesiastical property, should deliver him alive into the hands of the Pope, or whether the Pope should further concede to the Republic what its dignity demanded—the privilege of hanging and burning its own prophet on its own piazza.

Who, under such circumstances, would give full credit to this so-called confession? If the Frate had denied his prophetic gift, the denial had only been wrenched from him by the agony of torture—agony that, in his sensitive frame, must quickly produce raving. What if these

wicked examiners declared that he had only had the torture of the rope and pulley thrice, and only on one day, and that his confessions had been made when he was under no bodily coercion—was that to be believed? He had been tortured much more; he had been tortured in proportion to the distress his confessions had created in the hearts of those who loved him.

Other friends of Savonarola, who were less ardent partisans, did not doubt the substantial genuineness of the confession, however it might have been coloured by the transpositions and additions of the notary; but they argued indignantly that there was nothing which could warrant a condemnation to death, or even to grave punishment. It must be clear to all impartial men that if this examination represented the only evidence against the Frate, he would die, not for any crime, but because he had made himself inconvenient to the Pope, to the rapacious Italian States that wanted to dismember their Tuscan neighbour, and to those unworthy citizens who sought to gratify their private ambition in opposition to the common weal.

Not a shadow of political crime had been proved against him. Not one stain had been detected on his private conduct: his fellow monks, including one who had formerly been his secretary for several years, and who, with more than the average culture of his companions, had a disposition to criticize Fra Girolamo's rule as Prior, bore testimony, even after the shock of his retraction, to an unimpeachable purity and consistency in his life, which had commanded their unsuspecting veneration. The Pope himself had not been able to raise a charge of heresy against the Frate, except on the ground of disobedience to a mandate, and disregard of the sentence of excommunication. It was difficult to justify that breach of discipline by argument, but there was a moral insurgence in the minds of grave men against the Court of Rome, which tended to confound the theoretic distinction between the Church and churchmen, and to lighten the scandal of disobedience.

Men of ordinary morality and public spirit felt that the triumph of the Frate's enemies was really the triumph of gross licence. And keen Florentines like Soderini and Piero Guicciardini may well have had an angry smile on their lips at a severity which dispensed with all law in order to hang and burn a man in whom the seductions of a public career had warped the strictness of his *Veracity*; may well have remarked that if the Frate had mixed a much deeper fraud with a zeal and ability less inconvenient to high personages, the fraud would have been regarded as an excellent oil for ecclesiastical and political wheels.

Nevertheless such shrewd men were forced to admit that, however poor a figure the Florentine government made in its clumsy pretences of a judicial warrant for what had in fact been predetermined as an act of policy, the measures of the Pope against Savonarola were necessary measures of self-defence. Not to try and rid himself of a man who wanted to stir up the Powers of Europe to summon a General Council

and depose him, would have been adding ineptitude to iniquity. There was no denying that towards Alexander the Sixth Savonarola was a rebel, and what was much more, a dangerous rebel. Florence had heard him say, and had well understood what he meant, that he would not *obey the devil*. It was inevitably a life and death struggle between the Frate and the Pope; but it was less inevitable that Florence should make itself the Pope's executioner.

Romola's ears were filled in this way with the suggestions of a faith still ardent under its wounds, and the suggestions of worldly discernment, judging things according to a very moderate standard of what is possible to human nature. She could be satisfied with neither. She brought to her long meditations over that printed document many painful observations, registered more or less consciously through the years of her discipleship, which whispered a presentiment that Savonarola's retraction of his prophetic claims was not merely a spasmodic effort to escape from torture. But, on the other hand, her soul cried out for some explanation of his lapses which would make it still possible for her to believe that the main striving of his life had been pure and grand. The recent memory of the selfish discontent which had come over her like a blighting wind along with the loss of her trust in the man who had been for her an incarnation of the highest motives, had produced a reaction which is known to many as a sort of faith that has sprung up to them out of the very depths of their despair. It was impossible, she said now, that the negative disbelieving thoughts which had made her soul arid of all good, could be founded in the truth of things: impossible that it had not been a living spirit, and no hollow pretence, which had once breathed in the Frate's words, and kindled a new life in her. Whatever falsehood there had been in him, had been a fall and not a purpose; a gradual entanglement in which he struggled, not a contrivance encouraged by success.

Looking at the printed confessions she saw many sentences which bore the stamp of bungling fabrication: they had that emphasis and repetition in self-accusation which none but very low hypocrites use to their fellow-men. But the fact that these sentences were in striking opposition, not only to the character of Savonarola, but also to the general tone of the confessions, strengthened the impression that the rest of the text represented in the main what had really fallen from his lips. Hardly a word was dishonourable to him except what turned on his prophetic annunciations. He was unvarying in his statement of the ends he had pursued for Florence, the church, and the world; and, apart from the mixture of falsity in that claim to special inspiration by which he sought to gain hold of men's minds, there was no admission of having used unworthy means. Even in this confession, and without expurgation of the notary's malign phrases, Fra Girolamo shone forth as a man who had sought his own glory indeed, but sought it by labouring for the very highest end—the moral welfare of men—not by vague exhortations, but by striving to turn beliefs into energies that would work in all the details of life.

"Everything that I have done," said one memorable passage, which may perhaps have had its erasures and interpolations, "I have done with the design of being for ever famous, in the present and in future ages; and that I might win credit in Florence; and that nothing of great import should be done without my sanction. And when I had thus established my position in Florence, I had it in my mind to do great things in Italy beyond Italy, by means of those chief personages with whom I had contracted friendship and consulted on high matters, such as this of the General Council. And in proportion as my first efforts succeeded, I should have adopted further measures. Above all, when the General Council had once been brought about, I intended to rouse the princes of Christendom, and especially those beyond the borders of Italy, to subdue the infidels. It was not much in my thoughts to get myself made a Cardinal or Pope; for when I should have achieved the work I had in view, I should, without being Pope, have been the first man in the world in the authority I should have possessed, and the reverence that would have been paid me. If I had been made Pope, I would not have refused the office: but it seemed to me that to be the head of that work was a greater thing than to be Pope; because a man without virtue may be Pope, but *such a work as I contemplated demanded a man of excellent virtues.*"

That blending of ambition with belief in the supremacy of goodness made no new tone to Romola, who had been used to hear it in the voice that rang through the Duomo. It was the habit of Savonarola's mind to conceive great things, and to feel that he was the man to do them. Iniquity should be brought low; the cause of justice, purity, and love should triumph; and it should triumph by his voice, by his work, by his blood. In moments of ecstatic contemplation, doubtless, the sense of self melted in the sense of the unspeakable, and in that part of his experience lay the elements of genuine self-abasement; but in the presence of his fellow-men for whom he was to act, pre-eminence seemed a necessary condition of his life.

And perhaps this confession, even when it described a doubleness that was conscious and deliberate, really implied no more than that wavering of belief concerning his own impressions and motives which most human beings who have not a stupid inflexibility of self-confidence must be liable to under a marked change of external conditions? In a life where the experience was so tumultuously mixed ~~and~~ it must have been in the Friar's, what a possibility was opened for a change of self-judgment, when, instead of eyes that venerated and knees that knelt, instead of a great work on its way to accomplishment, and in its prosperity stamping the agent as a chosen instrument, there came the hooting and the spitting and the curses of the crowd; and then the hard faces of enemies made judges; and then the horrible torture, and with the torture the irrepressible cry, "It is true, what you would have me say: let me go, do not torture me again: yes, yes, I am guilty. O God! Thy stroke has reached me!"

As Romola thought of the anguish that must have followed the con-

session—whether, in the subsequent solitude of the prison, conscience retracted or confirmed the self-taxing words—that anguish seemed to be pressing on her own heart and urging the slow bitter tears. Every vulgar self-ignorant person in Florence was glibly pronouncing on this man's demerits, and he was knowing a depth of sorrow which can only be known to the soul that has loved and sought the most perfect thing, and beholds itself fallen.

She had not then seen—what she saw afterwards—the evidence of the Frate's mental state after he had had thus to lay his mouth in the dust. As the days went by, the reports of new unpublished examinations, eliciting no change of confessions, ceased; Savonarola was left alone in his prison and allowed pen and ink for a while, that, if he liked, he might use his poor bruised and strained right arm to write with. He wrote; but what he wrote was no vindication of his innocence, no protest against the proceedings used towards him: it was a continued colloquy with that Divine purity with which he sought complete reunion; it was the outpouring of self-abasement; it was one long cry for inward renovation. No lingering echoes of the old vehement self-assertion, "Look at my work, for it is good, and those who set their faces against it are the children of the devil!" The voice of Sadness tells him, "God placed thee in the midst of the people even as if thou hadst been one of the excellent. In this way thou hast taught others, and hast failed to learn thyself. Thou hast cured others: and thou thyself hast been still diseased. Thy heart was lifted up at the beauty of thy own deeds, and through this thou hast lost thy wisdom and art become, and shalt be to all eternity, nothing. . . . After so many benefits with which God has honoured thee, thou art fallen into the depths of the sea; and after so many gifts bestowed on thee, thou, by thy pride and vain-glory, hast scandalized all the world." And when Hope speaks and argues that the Divine love has not forsaken him, it says nothing now of a great work to be done, but only says, "Thou art not forsaken, else why is thy heart bowed in penitence? That, too, is a gift."

There is no jot of worthy evidence that from the time of his imprisonment to the supreme moment, Savonarola thought or spoke of himself as a martyr. The idea of martyrdom had been to him a passion dividing the dream of the future with the triumph of beholding his work achieved. And now, in place of both, had come a renunciation which he called by no glorifying name.

But therefore he may the more fitly be called a martyr by his fellow-men to all time. For power rose against him not because of his sins, but because of his greatness—not because he sought to deceive the world, but because he sought to make it noble. And through that greatness of his he endured a double agony: not only the reviling, and the torture, and the death-throe, but the agony of sinking from the vision of glorious achievement into that deep shadow where he could only say, "I count as nothing: darkness encompasses me: yet the light I saw was the true light."

## CHAPTER LXXII.

## THE LAST SILENCE.

ROMOLA had seemed to hear, as if they had been a cry, the words repeated to her by many lips—the words uttered by Savonarola when he took leave of those Brethren of San Marco who had come to witness his signature of the confession: “Pray for me, for God has withdrawn from me the spirit of prophecy.”

Those words had shaken her with new doubts as to the mode in which he looked back at the past in moments of complete self-possession. And the doubts were strengthened by more piteous things still, which soon reached her ears.

The nineteenth of May had come, and by that day's sunshine there had entered into Florence the two Papal Commissaries, charged with the completion of Savonarola's trial. They entered amid the acclamations of the people, calling for the death of the Frate. For now the popular cry was, “It is the Frate's deception that has brought on all our misfortunes; let him be burned, and all things right will be done, and our evils will cease.”

The next day it is well certified that there was fresh and fresh torture of the shattered sensitive frame; and now, at the first threat and first sight of the horrible implements, Savonarola, in convulsed agitation, fell on his knees, and in brief, passionate words, *retracted his confession*, declared that he had spoken falsely in denying his prophetic gift, and that if he suffered, he would suffer for the truth—“The things that I have spoken, I had them from God.”

But not the less the torture was laid upon him, and when he was under it he was asked why he had uttered those retracting words. Men were not demons in those days, and yet nothing but confessions of guilt were held a reason for release from torture. The answer came: “I said it that I might seem good; tear me no more, I will tell you the truth.”

There were Florentine assessors at this new trial, and those words of twofold retraction had soon spread. They filled Romola with dismayed uncertainty.

“But”—it flashed across her—“there will come a moment when he may speak. When there is no dread hanging over him but the dread of falsehood, when they have brought him into the presence of death, when he is lifted above the people, and looks on them for the last time, they cannot hinder him from speaking a last decisive word. I will be there.”

Three days after, on the 23rd of May, 1498, there was again a long narrow platform stretching across the great piazza, from the Palazzo Vecchio towards the Titta de' Pisanì. But there was no grove of fuel as before: instead of that, there was one great heap of fuel placed on the

circular area which made the termination of the long narrow platform. And above this heap of fuel rose a gibbet with three halts on it; a gibbet which, having two arms, still looked so much like a cross as to make some beholders uncomfortable, though one arm had been truncated to avoid the resemblance.

On the marble terrace of the Palazzo were three tribunals; one near the door for the Bishop, who was to perform the ceremony of degradation on Fra Girolamo and the two Brethren who were to suffer as his followers and accomplices; another for the Papal Commissaries, who were to pronounce them heretics and schismatics, and deliver them over to the secular arm; and a third, close to Marzocco, at the corner of the terrace where the platform began, for the Gonfaloniere, and the Eight who were to pronounce the sentence of death.

Again the piazza was thronged with expectant faces: again there was to be a great fire kindled. In the majority of the crowd that pressed around the gibbet the expectation was that of ferocious hatred, or of mere hard curiosity to behold a barbarous sight. But there were still many spectators on the wide pavement, on the roofs, and at the windows, who, in the midst of their bitter grief and their own endurance of insult as hypocritical Pagnoni, were not without a lingering hope, even at this eleventh hour, that God would interpose, by some sign, to manifest their beloved prophet as His servant. And there were yet more who looked forward with trembling eagerness, as Romola did, to that final moment when Savonarola might say, "O people, I was innocent of deceit."

Romola was at a window on the north side of the piazza, far away from the marble terrace where the tribunals stood, and near her, also looking on in painful doubt concerning the man who had won his early reverence, was a young Florentine of two and-twenty, named Jacopo Nardi, afterwards to deserve honour as one of the very few who, feeling Fra Girolamo's eminence, have written about him with the simple desire to be veracious. He had said to Romola, with respectful gentleness, when he saw the struggle in her between her shuddering horror of the scene and her yearning to witness what might happen in the last moment,

"Madonna, there is no need for you to look at these cruel things. I will tell you when he comes out of the Palazzo. Trust to me; I know what you would see."

Romola covered her face, but the horrors that seemed to make the hideous scene still visible could not be shut out. At last her arm was touched, and she heard the word, "He comes." She looked towards the Palace, and could see Savonarola led out in his Dominican garb; could see him standing before the Bishop, and being stripped of the black mantle, the white scapulary, and long white tunic, till he stood in a close woollen under-tunic, that told of no sacred office, no rank. He had been degraded, and cut off from the Church Militant.

The baser part of the multitude delight in degradations, apart from any hatred; it is the nature they best understand. There was a fresh hoo-

of triumph as the three degraded Brethren passed on to the tribunal of the Papal Commissaries, who were to pronounce them schismatics and heretics. Did not the prophet look like a schismatic and heretic now? It is easy to believe in the damnable state of a man who stands stripped and degraded.

Then the third tribunal was passed—that of the Florentine officials ~~who~~ were to pronounce sentence, and amongst whom, even at her distance, Romola could discern the odious figure of Dolfo Spini, indued in the grave black lucco, as one of the Eight.

Then the three figures, in their close white raiment, trod their way along the platform, amidst yells and grating tones of insult.

"Cover your eyes, madonna," said Jacopo Nardi; "Fra Girolamo will be the last."

It was not long before she had to uncover them again. Savonarola was there. He was not far off her now. He had mounted the steps; she could see him look round on the multitude.

But in the same moment expectation died, and she only saw what he was seeing—torches waving to kindle the fuel beneath his dead body, faces glaring with a yet worse light; she only heard what he was hearing—gross jests, taunts, and curses.

The moment was past. Her face was covered again, and she only knew that Savonarola's voice had passed into eternal silence.

## EPILOGUE.

On the evening of the twenty-second of May, 1500, five persons, of whose history we have known something, were seated in a handsome upper room opening on to a loggia which, at its right-hand corner, looked all along the Borgo Pinti, and over the city gate towards Fiesole, and the solemn heights beyond it.

At one end of the room was an archway opening into a narrow inner room, hardly more than a recess, where the light fell from above on a small altar covered with fair white linen. Over the altar was a picture, discernible at the distance where the little party sat only as the small full-length portrait of a Dominican Brother. For it was shaded from the light above by overhanging branches and wreaths of flowers, and the fresh tapers below it were unlit. But it seemed that the decoration of the altar and its recess was not complete. For part of the floor was strewn with a confusion of flowers and green boughs, and among them sat a delicate blue-eyed girl of thirteen, tossing her long light-brown hair out of her eyes, as she made selections for the wreaths she was weaving,



or looked up at her mother's work in the same kind, and told her how to do it with a little air of instruction.

For that mother was not very clever at weaving flowers or at any other work. Tessa's fingers had not become more adroit with the years—only very much fatter. She got on slowly and turned her head about a good deal, and asked Ninna's opinion with much deference; for Tessa never ceased to be astonished at the wisdom of her children. She still wore her *contadina* gown: it was only broader than the old one; and there was the silver pin in her rough curly brown hair, and round her neck the memorable necklace, with a red cord under it, that ended mysteriously in her bosom. Her rounded face wore even a more perfect look of childish content than in her younger days: everybody was so good in the world, Tessa thought; even Monna Brigida never found fault with her now, and did little else than sleep, which was an amiable practice in everybody, and one that Tessa liked for herself.

Monna Brigida was asleep at this moment, in a straight-backed arm-chair, a couple of yards off. Her hair, parting backward under her black hood, had that soft whiteness which is not like snow or anything else, but is simply the lovely whiteness of aged hair. Her chin had sunk on her bosom, and her hands rested on the elbow of her chair. She had not been weaving flowers or doing anything else: she had only been looking on as usual, and as usual had fallen asleep.

The other two figures were seated farther off, at the wide doorway that opened on to the loggia. Lillo sat on the ground with his back against the angle of the door-post, and his long legs stretched out, while he held a large book open on his knee and occasionally made a dash with his hand at an inquisitive fly, with an air of interest stronger than that excited by the finely-printed copy of Petrarch which he kept open at one place, as if he were learning something by heart.

Romola sat nearly opposite Lillo, but she was not observing him. Her hands were crossed on her lap and her eyes were fixed absently on the distant mountains: she was evidently unconscious of anything around her. An eager life had left its marks upon her: the finely moulded cheek had sunk a little, the golden crown was less massive; but there was a placidity in Romola's face which had never belonged to it in youth. It is but once that we can know our worst sorrows, and Romola had known them while life was new.

Absorbed in this way, she was not at first aware that Lillo had ceased to look at his book, and was watching her with a slightly impatient air, which meant that he wanted to talk to her, but was not quite sure whether she would like that entertainment just now. But persevering looks make themselves felt at last. Romola did presently turn away her eyes from the distance and meet Lillo's impatient dark gaze with a brighter and brighter smile. He shuffled along the floor, still keeping the book on his lap, till he got close to her and lodged his chin on her knee.

"What is it, Lillo?" said Romola, pulling his hair back from his brow. Lillo was a handsome lad, but his features were turning out to be more massive and less regular than his father's. The blood of the Tuscan peasant was in his veins.

"Mamma Romola, what am I to be?" he said, well contented that there was a prospect of talking till it would be too late to con "*Spirto gentil*" any longer.

"What should you like to be, Lillo? You might be a scholar. My father was a scholar, you know, and taught me a great deal. That is the reason why I can teach you."

"Yes," said Lillo, rather hesitatingly. "But he is old and blind in the picture. Did he get a great deal of glory?"

"Not much, Lillo. The world was not always very kind to him, and he saw meaner men than himself put into higher places, because they could flatter and say what was false. And then his dear son thought it right to leave him and become a monk; and after that, my father being blind and lonely, felt unable to do the things that would have made his learning of greater use to men, so that he might still have lived in his works after he was in his grave."

"I should not like that sort of life," said Lillo. "I should like to be something that would make me a great man, and very happy besides—something that would not hinder me from having a good deal of pleasure."

"That is not easy, my Lillo. It is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world, as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good. There are so many things wrong and difficult in the world, that no man can be great—he can hardly keep himself from wickedness—unless he gives up thinking much about pleasures or rewards, and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful. My father had the greatness that belongs to integrity; he chose poverty and obscurity rather than falsehood. And there was *Fra Girolamo*—you know why I keep to-morrow sacred: he had the greatness which belongs to a life spent in struggling against powerful wrong, and in trying to raise men to the highest deeds they are capable of. And so, my Lillo, if you mean to act nobly and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of men, you must learn to fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it. And remember, if you were to choose something lower, and make it the rule of your life to seek your own pleasure and escape from what is disagreeable, calamity might come just the same; and it would be calamity falling on a base mind, which is the one form of sorrow that has no balm in it, and that may well make a

man say,—‘It would have been better for me if I had never been born.’ I will tell you something, Lillo.”

Romola paused a moment. She had taken Lillo’s cheeks between her hands, and his young eyes were meeting hers.

“There was a man to whom I was very near, so that I could see a great deal of his life, who made almost every one fond of him, for he was young, and clever, and beautiful, and his manners to all were gentle and kind. I believe, when I first knew him, he never thought of doing anything cruel or base. But because he tried to slip away from everything that was unpleasant, and cared for nothing else so much as his own safety, he came at last to commit some of the basest deeds—such as make men infamous. He denied his father, and left him to misery; he betrayed every trust that was reposed in him, that he might keep himself safe and get rich and prosperous. Yet calamity overtook him.”

Again Romola paused. Her voice was unsteady, and Lillo was looking up at her with awed wonder.

“Another time, my Lillo—I will tell you another time. See, there are our old Piero di Cosimo and Nello coming up the Borgo Pinti, bringing us their flowers. Let us go and wave our hands to them, that they may know we see them.”

“How queer old Piero is,” said Lillo, as they stood at the corner of the loggia, watching the advancing figures. “He abuses you for dressing the altar, and thinking so much of Fra Girolamo, and yet he brings you the flowers.”

“Never mind,” said Romola. “There are many good people who did not love Fra Girolamo. Perhaps I should never have learned to love him if he had not helped me when I was in great need.”

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## Medical Etiquette.

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In a recent article some remarks were made upon those peculiar, unwritten laws which govern the three learned professions, and which make them objects partly of mystery and partly, it must be confessed, of jealous dislike to the general public. It was, however, only with regard to the legal profession that the subject was treated with any particularity. At present, we intend to discuss, as briefly as possible, what we venture to say are at least as interesting—the principles of etiquette which are tacitly adopted by the members of the medical profession.

It seems necessary to inquire a little, in the first place, into the special character of that *esprit de corps* which unites medical men in the observance of certain ethical traditions, for special it certainly is, and perfectly distinct from the analogous feeling which animates lawyers and divines. The truth is, that this feeling depends ultimately upon the functions which the medical body has to perform, and these are highly peculiar. The grand distinctive feature of medicine is that it is at once an inexact science and one which is absolutely necessary to the wants of humanity. There are no general laws of healing established from which the physician can, in the calm retirement of his study, deduce particular rules of practice for all possible occasions; but the pressing needs of suffering men and women cry loudly for help; and to meet these urgent claims upon them medical men are forced to apply, as best they may, systems of treatment which often rest upon inductions which they well know are neither as numerous nor as carefully made as they should be. The common sneer at the "uncertainties of medicine" is easy; but we think that a more useful purpose might be served by inquiring whether those very rules of medical etiquette, which to the public sometimes seem like the grotesque trappings of professional conceit and egotism, be not, in fact, our best preservatives against the evils which such uncertainties might give rise to. We think that it will not be difficult to show that this is really the case.

Medical men are, necessarily, the dependants of an *empirical science*. It is necessary to explain the sense in which we use this term, and we cannot do so better than in the words of a most eloquent living physician—M. Trousseau. "Empiricism," says M. Trousseau, "means *experiment*, and nothing more nor less. . . . Experimentation, independent of all theory, is ~~this~~ completely opposed to that which we call *dogmatism*, which proceeds, it is true, on a basis of facts furnished by empiric observation, but which systematizes completely and roundly, leaving no vacant spaces. The theorists who approve neither of empiricism, nor of the empirics or their proceedings, have attempted to pour blame and ridicule upon them, and (perverting the word from its proper meaning)

have applied the name empiricism to the medicine of haphazard, of secrets, and of formulas; to the medical practice of housewives, of nurses, and of quacks." M. Troussseau proceeds to show how improper and unjust is this latter application of the word empiricism, which ought, in fact, to be used only to express *art* as opposed to *science*.

It is obvious that medicine, being thus an art, rather than a deductive science, demands, in those who practise it, an unusual amount of some rather uncommon virtues. The magnitude of the issues at stake, the enormous temptations to seek short paths to success and to forsake the cautious method of induction which has alone enabled empiricism to accomplish any good thing, and the unparalleled facilities for deceiving either the patient, or themselves, or both: all these point to the necessity of a courageous and clear-sighted honesty in medical men, which is not too common in any class of society: a necessity, in fact, for incessant watchfulness against temptations to egotism, which would lead the physician to credit his own experiments too readily with success. Now it is against this very sin of egotism, against this tendency to assert oneself to be something which one is not, that all rules of medical etiquette are practically directed. These rules divide themselves naturally into three groups; for there is the etiquette which governs the relations of doctors with each other, that which governs their conduct to their patients, and, last, but not least in importance, the etiquette which decides the attitude which the profession generally shall assume towards the whole lay public.

The etiquette which rules doctors in their dealings with each other is popularly much misunderstood. It is believed that medical men observe a certain loyalty to each other because they expect that the good offices which they perform for a *confrère* will be repaid by similar services. That such a motive to mutual loyalty does, in a secondary way, influence doctors in their behaviour to each other, there can be no doubt; nevertheless, this is not the true origin of the tendency to support each other which all decent medical men show. The true reason for it is the instinctive consciousness on the doctor's part that he needs all the moral help and sympathy he can get to keep himself true, and honest, and unpretending; without which qualities he knows full well his work will never be satisfactory, nor he himself a happy man. For this reason he refuses steadily, if he be an honourable man, to credit any stories of miscarriage from want of skill on the part of a brother practitioner on anything short of the positive evidence of unprejudiced medical observers, or to allow any weight to the statements of laymen to such effect, unless they are susceptible of this kind of confirmation. The consideration would also force itself on his mind, that by any other course he would expose scientific truth to grave danger, and that he would not improbably be helping to give authority to some false doctrine in science which might one day be used with terrible effect against himself, unless he were willing to consent to be dishonest.

Let us take another case in which a medical man's sympathy and sense of fairness to a brother practitioner is often put to the test. Nothing is more common, with a certain class of patients, than to change their medical attendants upon the most frivolous pretexts. Other persons (and those the wiser and more thoughtful part of society) are not fond of such changes, and only under the impression of gross mal-praxis on the part of their doctor would they be inclined to dismiss him. However, on serious or trivial grounds, as the case may be, a good many doctors do receive their dismissal, and an equal number are called to fill their vacant posts, and some important questions at once arise as to the way in which the latter ought to conduct themselves. It is by no means an enviable post, that of the last summoned doctor, for the chances are ninety-nine out of a hundred that he will be solicited, more or less directly, to give an unfavourable opinion of the system of his predecessor. Of course in a large number of instances he will feel bound to decline to do this, because he knows that the previous treatment was quite proper; but in a certain number of cases it naturally happens that he considers that the treatment was wrong; nay, he may even believe that the late attendant was criminally neglectful, and did not use the skill and knowledge which he actually possessed. In the first place, however, it may be confidently said that no honourable practitioner would desire to make capital out of the mistakes of a colleague, still less to profit by the injustice of patients towards a former medical adviser. Secondly, supposing that he finds himself so closely interrogated that he has no choice but either to damage the reputation of a *confrère*, to besmirch his own conscience, or to offend a new client by his reticence, the decision, though it may be painful and trying to have to make it, cannot be doubtful to a just man. The last alternative—that of disappointing that appetite for detecting people in mistakes and misdemeanors, which his patient feels—must be faced, and the doctor has the plain duty before him of refusing to answer the questions put to him.

Again: let us take the case of a medical man who is called upon by a patient to pronounce an opinion on the question whether another practitioner has or has not been guilty of neglect amounting to a legal crime? Let us suppose that his internal judgment answers this question in the affirmative; even in this case he would decline to give any answer until he had communicated with the accused person, and heard his version of the matter; and if this should fail to shake the opinion already formed, the medical man whose opinion had been sought would still delay to deliver any judgment until he had consulted with some impartial professional authority. Nothing short of a previous investigation of this kind would be felt, by any honourable practitioner, to justify a charge of criminality against a colleague—and nothing short of criminality ought to tempt him to make any charge at all. In all cases short of this, true etiquette suggests that he should take refuge in absolute silence, if he cannot justify his brother practitioner. And whenever he has reason to

suppose that personal spite has instigated the request for his judicial opinion, he feels bound to throw cold water with all possible emphasis on the complaints of his client.

Another case, well adapted to test a medical man's loyalty to other members of the profession, is that of a physician called to give a second opinion in a case with the treatment of which the patient's friends are angrily dissatisfied. In many instances, of course, the original attendant is only too happy to assent to the consultation taking place, and the meeting of the doctors passes off in a perfectly friendly way. Such is not always the case, however: for the first medical attendant may have reason to know beforehand that the opinions of his proposed assistant differ so radically from his own that there is little chance of their coming to an agreement. Under these circumstances, the conference is almost inevitably entered on, by one or both parties, in a spirit of involuntary hostility: and it may well happen that they may find themselves obliged to tell the patient that there is no hope of their agreement. Now comes the awkward point: the patient or his friends must of course decide as to which of the proffered counsels they will be guided by; and the position of the adviser whose opinion is overridden becomes such as to test severely his loyalty to a colleague, as much. For his pride, joined with a certain swelling indignation born of strong scientific conviction, may urge him to throw up the case and retire; while his duty certainly bids him remain, and assist in carrying out thoroughly the plan of his rival.

One more illustration of the mutual relations of doctors will suffice us. A medical man happens to have a dear friend who is dangerously ill, and who is being treated by another doctor in a way which his medical friend disapproves. Is the latter to interfere, and to tell the patient or his friends his own opinion? He would certainly not do so until he had consulted the regular attendant privately. The latter would probably request his co-operation in the treatment and throw the responsibility of deciding whose advice shall be followed upon the patient's friends.

The above illustrations will, perhaps, sufficiently indicate the substantial principle on which doctors, though often unconsciously, base their conduct to each other. But, as in common life, the treatment which we bestow on any man depends much on whether or not we believe that he is acting honestly, so in the medical profession, any person who claims the benefit of that particular kind of social justice which we call etiquette must be able to prove that he is acting in good faith. The essence of all quackery, properly so called, is the absence of a *bona fides*, and it would be therefore interesting to define, if possible, what constitutes proof of such deficiency.

In the first place, it is needless to say that if any man pretends to understand the art of curing human diseases, he implies that he has studied the vital structure and functions of the human body, the natural history of diseases, and the effect of medicines on the healthy and on the sick

person respectively. Studies such as these are enormously expensive and troublesome, and can only be carried out by means of the association of students in a hospital school, such as exist in our metropolitan and some of our provincial cities. Unless, therefore, a medical man could give evidence of a reasonable period of study passed at such an institution, he might justly be suspected of bad faith in pretending to be able to cure: if he had passed such a period of study, diligently employed, he could have no difficulty in passing a legally qualifying examination; we should ask him, therefore, to produce his diploma, and we should justly deny, to a man who could not do so, the special courtesies due to a scientific colleague. But this is a comparatively simple case. A far more embarrassing question is, what attitude to assume towards a man who possesses the legal diploma, but disgraces it by his practice—we do not mean morally, but intellectually? What is the nature of the trust committed into the hands of a medical man at the time of his receiving a licence to practise? It certainly is not intended by his examiners as a permission to be blind to the progress of science and to continue obstinately to stick fast *super antiquas vias*, in the bad sense: and yet the temptation to do this is strong, and, in a certain number of cases, will prevail; nor could we expect anything else from the weakness of human nature. It is obvious that such a line of conduct involves a breach of good faith, which is quite as bad as that committed by the unlicensed quack, and, in strict justice, the doctor who follows this course ought to be denied the courtesies of the cloth. But this case is a proof that the laws of medical etiquette share the defects of all human laws; for, unfortunately, it is at present practically impossible to carry out the sentence on this class of offenders. So profoundly ignorant is the public of medical things, that this sort of negative conservatism is rather encouraged than otherwise by one class of patients, and the men who practise it sometimes obtain a large business and a high social consideration, which render it difficult to enforce professional penalties against them. It is worthy of note, that from this class of practitioners, happily becoming small, has proceeded nearly all that is exaggerated and unreal in medical etiquette—all that makes it resemble the vexatious frivolity of a Spanish code of ceremony.

The etiquette of doctors in dealing with their patients is regulated, of course, for the most part, by rules of ordinary good-breeding, which it is not necessary to dilate upon here. There is one question, however, which it is not easy to answer, and out of which arise many practical difficulties. How far is the doctor to treat his patient as a confidant? How far is it advisable for him to explain the reasons for the treatment he adopts, and the chances, so far as they can humanly be calculated, of success?

As for the question of explaining reasons for treatment, that may always be left to the doctor's discretion in each case, since it is a matter on which he clearly has the right to decide absolutely. The other question,—whether the doctor ought to make the patient a confidant of his ideas as to the probable issue of the illness,—cannot be so easily settled;



and indeed must be answered in very different terms, according to the circumstances of the individual case. Abstractedly speaking, no doubt the patient has a right, at all times, to insist on knowing the real opinion of his medical adviser as to the prospects of his malady. But as it would be manifestly foolish to give the patient this gratification at the expense of doing his health serious injury by the alarm which a very unfavourable opinion would excite in his mind, it is certainly justifiable to evade questionings on these points *within certain limits*. And as these limits are difficult to define, it may be as well at once to separate certain cases in which it certainly is not lawful to deceive the patient.

To argue from small things to great: in the first place, it clearly would not be just to allow a dying patient to remain ignorant of his state when there was a probability that this would lead him to neglect matters of business highly important to relatives and friends, unless the shock of the news of his danger would be likely to accelerate his death materially. And even in cases where the prospect of death was more remote, but still (humanly speaking) certain to be realized within a limited time, there could be no question, except that of the proper moment, as to the doctor's duty to declare his opinion when such interests were at stake. But he might very fairly shift all the responsibility, as to the manner of communicating the news to the patient, upon the relatives of the latter.

The influence which spiritual considerations ought to have in deciding a medical man to divulge a patient's real condition to him, is a very grave and difficult subject; and it is one respecting which we take leave to say that doctors are often grievously misunderstood and misrepresented by well-meaning persons, especially by the clergy. To take the case of persons actually in dying circumstances, with but a few hours of this world before them—here, since the hope of saving life has fled, the part of common honesty seems to be to inform the patient truly of his condition; and yet various arguments have been urged upon the other side. It is the duty of the doctor, say some, not merely to save life if he can, but, in cases where he is powerless to avert death, to promote the euthanasia, the peaceful and painless termination of life. In many cases, to inform the patient of an immediately approaching death would be to throw him into an agony of spiritual excitement; while, on the other hand, it is difficult to believe that, in his enfeebled condition, the mind could work freely and to useful purpose in the short time which remains.

There is a great deal of truth in these remarks. There can be no doubt that the doctor is bound to soothe, as well as to cure; and it is equally certain that the unexpected news of impending death would be to most persons very agitating. And it must be allowed that the extreme languor and feebleness of all mental operations, so far as we can see them, in the great majority of dying persons, give little hope that any useful self-examination can be made by moribund patients. To these considerations we reply that, putting aside altogether the question of supernatural

influence, as a topic unfit for discussion here, we have yet one answer which virtually settles the whole matter. By virtue of his very office the doctor is *no theologian*, that is, no decider of theological questions; it is not for him to meddle in these things as one having any authority; he is but the priest of another and a humbler temple. He is bound to deliver himself of the particular message which he has to tell (either to the patient or his friends), for this is one chief reason why doctors are employed, and common honesty demands that the tacit compact be fulfilled. The *only* exception to this rule is when there is a strong probability that the mental agitation produced will cut short life at once, or at least much more rapidly than it would otherwise have been brought to an end.

And still less, if we reflect upon it, does it seem justifiable for the medical attendant to allow patients who are doomed to death within a limited period, but who are not in immediate danger, to remain ignorant of their condition. For here the mental faculties are not overclouded, there is still time and strength for the performance of many important duties, still clearness of vision sufficient for a review of the long procession of past events and feelings. Concealment of the truth appears to us, in this case, to be simply unjust, although we well know that the motive which prompts it is humane. An instance of this mistaken kindness once came under our notice, and impressed us deeply. A celebrated hospital physician was walking the round of his patients, attended by a large number of students. Among the sick was a poor girl, evidently the victim of advanced consumption, but whose spirits were naturally buoyant, and were raised still higher by the flattering promises of probable amendment of health which, to our surprise, the doctor gave her. But no sooner had we left the ward than the great man turned to us, and said, with a smile of gentle melancholy, "Heaven forgive me! I could not tell a poor girl like that the real state of the case, you know."

The mistake here made was a natural one, but it was not the less a mistake, and a grave one. It was neither more nor less than allowing sentimentality to weigh against and prevail over the promptings of truth and of justice, and it cannot be too strongly reprobated. With mere sentimental likings and dislikings the physician has nothing to do; he is bound to mortify to the utmost his personal predilections, and to act simply as an honest adviser; and it may be added, that he will never need to contravene, in so acting, the instincts of real and far-sighted benevolence. It is obvious that, while weakly shrinking from the performance of a duty which might give present pain, the medical man in the story we have related was laying up for his patient, in all probability, much future anguish against the time of inevitable disclosure: and we are glad to think that such mistakes are not often made.

But there are numerous cases in which the physician's duty is by no means so clear as in the cases which we have referred to. It may, and often does happen, that he is himself doubtful as to his patient's chances of recovery, though in his private opinion the balance of probabilities

may be against a favourable issue, while he has the certain conviction that to tell the sick man of his danger would be to affect those chances fatally. Under such circumstances he will probably feel that his readiest escape from a difficulty of conscience is to communicate the real state of affairs to the patient's friends under a pledge that it shall not be repeated to the sufferer himself. But he has no right to take even this course unless he has a reasonable belief in their discretion ; for secrecy in this case forms a part of his therapeutical armament, and he is not justified in throwing away a single weapon causelessly. So long as there is any hope, so long ought the interest of the patient's bodily health to outweigh every consideration in the physician's mind ; for he is the appointed custodian of those interests, and must do his duty in regard to them. It will easily be seen that the responsibility of coming to a decision in such cases is a heavy one, and that it must press severely on a conscientious man ; and we may add that the situation of the physician is far more often one that should command sympathy than blame, even when he decides wrongly in such instances, and disaster follows from his conduct.

And now we have to consider medical etiquette as it affects the relations of the whole *corps médical* to the general public. This is a subject far too little reflected on ; but the great importance of which is manifesting itself more and more clearly every day.

It is not in accordance with a high conception of etiquette, for the man of science to proclaim one scientific fact so loudly and clamorously as to divert the attention of an unwary audience from other facts which materially modify its value. When, for instance, a well-known analyst declares (with such emphasis that one could fancy tears of gratitude standing in his eyes) that B—— and Co.'s London stout is a pure, a wholesome, a nourishing, a life-giving drink, he allows a too innocent public to suppose that the vats of Guinness, and Barclay, and Buxton, and Meux contain but a dull and muddy liquor, a mere sap of the tree of knowledge of evil ! And when the same great man asserts that, after minute inspection, of the most severely scientific kind, he has ascertained a fact which he thinks it necessary to print, viz. that D—— and Co. really sell pure and well-grown tea, does he not plainly hint that in this country the sale of sloe-leaves is mournfully common, if not all but universal ? We are sorry to say that we once saw a still more striking instance of limited appreciation : it was no less than a testimonial, framed and glazed, in a hair-dresser's window, purporting to emanate from a very well-known practitioner, and bearing servid witness to the renovating influence of a—hair-wash ! However, we should make some allowance here. It was probably in the first delirium of joy on discovering that he had derived personal benefit from the preparation, that the man of science wrote those unguarded lines.

The custom here touched upon, of scientific men giving testimonials to particular tradesmen, for which they are paid, and which the tradesmen at once turn into money to large amounts, is indeed a very serious

one; and it may well be considered whether such a practice ought not to be checked, or at least regulated, by legislative enactment. It is very easy to speak with indignation of the scientific men who act in this way, but the fault is not only, or even in greatest part, on their side. It is chiefly to be found in the increasing laxity of commercial morals, which ~~of~~ <sup>allows</sup> respectable merchants to use without a scruple means of increasing their trade which are, in truth, nothing less than so many forms of deception. The merchant dares to offer a bribe to the scientific man, though he is not so foolish as to put it in that coarse form, which he knows would be too revolting. And the man of science, quieting his first qualms of conscience with the fallacious truism that the goods really *are* excellent, reports accordingly, with all due flourish of scientific trumpets.

There is another way in which, by the statement of a part only of the truth, scientific men have it in their power to do much harm. In an article in the March number of the *Cornhill Magazine*, we noticed and deplored the scandalous conflicts of medical evidence which so frequently have occurred on criminal trials; and we ventured to suggest what the nature of any remedy must be which could hope to have any success in abating this evil. The remedy essentially consisted in making the whole business of medical evidence in courts of law an organized affair, and removing it out of the region of personal animosities and rivalries, and of grosser temptations. And this is, in fact, the essence of all genuine etiquette: it is a league of honest men who, for the best of purposes—that of preserving their honesty—submit themselves to certain restraining rules and regulations. In such a league it would be utterly forbidden to suggest views of what *might have been*, or to relate facts the whole value of which depends on their relation to other facts which are ignored.

We have thus endeavoured to give some illustrations of the way in which the laws of medical etiquette, reflecting as they do the essential character of medical science itself, are no mean palladium of the highest qualities which all high-minded practitioners would desire to see perpetuated in the profession. And now we have a few words to say concerning the degree in which medical men themselves maintain the standard which these rules point to.

It must be owned that the correspondence between what is tacitly acknowledged to be right, and what is actually practised, is not very exact—that is to say, not in all cases. There is a class of men composed of isolated individuals in all ranks of the profession, for whom the bitter struggle with ~~an~~ adverse fortune is too much, who succumb from want of strength; and because they are not able to bear the accumulated weight of poverty and excessive labour, choose the shorter paths to fortune, even though they be somewhat miry. Every such case tells, and is glaringly conspicuous to the public. Who is so well known and so freely talked of as the practitioner with quackish tendencies? Every foolish vulgar thing

the poor man ever did or said becomes the subject of a jest or denunciation; even his absurd habit of wearing black trousers, tail-coat, and white neckcloth, in the daytime, though harmless enough in itself, goes to make up an ideal which the intelligent classes of society despise and detest in its entirety. But let the reader try and estimate fairly what is the proportion of such men (having any legal qualification) to the respectable classes of the profession, and we think he will confess that it is at least as small as that of the black sheep to the white in either of the other professions which are called "learned." If this opinion be correct, it must certainly be to the laws of etiquette, the tradition of our forefathers, that we owe this immunity from any extraordinary tendency to humbug and quackery; for the temptations to it are enormous in the medical profession, and such as lawyers and divines have no idea of. The ignorance of the public on medical matters is so complete, and the very first steps in the path to knowledge of these matters seems to it so mysteriously difficult, that the humblest village doctor finds himself a hero—almost a magician—to a number of people. What a trial for men to have to endure whose minds are not particularly well trained, as from poverty is often the case with medical men! There must surely be some potent influence at work, keeping them the honest, steady-going, genuine men that, as a class, they are. Doubtless, a part of this effect is due to the sobering influence of looking constantly in the face of the great mysteries of Life, Disease, and Death; but these are influences with which one soon becomes familiar, too familiar to be inspired with the awe with which they struck the mind at first. We cannot doubt that it is the unwritten law which we, borrowing a tinsel-sounding foreign name, have called Etiquette, which really does, in great measure, produce this salutary effect; and we trust the day is far off when anything like a demolition of the outworks, which, if our view be right, guard the honesty and purity of the medical profession, shall be levelled, and the principle introduced of every man fighting simply for his own head, and in defiance of the interests of those to whom he ought naturally to look with warm sympathy.

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## Farmers.

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THE "British farmer" belongs to that category of ideal personages under which come the "British merchant," the "old English gentleman," the "Irish peasant," and other embodiments of certain national characteristics, which have now to a great extent been, as it were, dispersed, and diffused over the general body politic. He still does survive, however, as a distinct type, if not exactly answering to all that our fancy may have painted him. It is rare, certainly, to meet with a genuine Poyser, perhaps the most perfect representation of the old race of farmers that has ever been produced in fiction. But something very like him may still be met with in the more secluded parts of England, and when once encountered he is not likely to be forgotten. He lived like Dandie Dinmont, in a kind of "sluttish plenty;" farming fairly, saving little, reading nothing: nursing, generally speaking, a sincere veneration for Church and King as the barriers which, somehow or other, kept out Frenchmen, kickshaws, and Catholics; respecting the clergyman and the squire as representatives of these two institutions; given to few vices and contented with few pleasures; altogether a sturdy, stationary, simple-hearted kind of man, who perplexed himself very little with politics, or, indeed, with any one's affairs except his own, and those of his own parish.

Now, however, this kind of man is the exception and not the rule. The pursuit of farming has extended itself so much among all classes of society, that farmers have to be divided into several distinct classes, no one of which corresponds with any exactness to the traditional agriculturist. When people now talk of farmers, they have only a very vague idea of what they mean by the word. Sometimes they mean any man who farms at all; sometimes any man who makes a livelihood of farming; sometimes only the regular tenant farmer who works upon the land himself, and in no way aspires to be a gentleman. It is, however, only to the last two of these classes that the term properly belongs, and more properly to the third than to the second. That is to say, it would always be an adequate account of a tenant farmer to say that he was a farmer; but it would not always be so in the case of any man who lived by farming. For instance, many men of good birth and university education have of late years taken to agriculture as a trade. But if one were asked what such a man was, and replied merely that he was a farmer, we should probably convey a very erroneous impression of him to the inquirer's mind.

Nor would it always be sufficient to say that such a one was a gentleman farmer. In many parts of England, it is true, this title denotes exclusively the gentleman who happens to farm. But elsewhere it is

simply the modern substitute for the yeoman, signifying a man who has land of his own, and is wealthier and more independent than the majority of tenants. Dismissing, therefore, all that class of persons who, if they farm at all, really do it either as an amusement or a scientific experiment, or whose proper work in life, at all events, is not that of a farmer, such as the nobility, squirearchy, and clergy of these realms, there remain, upon the whole, three classes, first, the gentleman farmer who is so called because he is a gentleman; secondly, the gentleman farmer who is so called to distinguish him from the tenant farmer; and thirdly, the tenant farmer himself, the most unmixed specimen of the genus. All these, of course, have a great deal in common *qua* farmers. But they are often wide as the poles asunder in education and intelligence; so that when smart London clubmen speak glibly of the "bucolic mind," they should recollect of what very various ingredients that mind is now composed; and that a good deal of refinement and literature and general culture is mixed up with it, which leavens the mass, and renders it more worthy of reverence than they are, too frequently, disposed to think it.

The gentleman farmer number one is almost always a capital kind of man to know. With the tastes and personal habits of the most refined classes he often unites a kind of jolly simplicity that one does not always find in squires. He feels that he is to some extent roughing it, that he is, as it were, "in the bush." He is conscious that not a very few years ago he must have been either a barrister, a soldier, or a clergyman, struggling perhaps on a short allowance or a poor living. Now he has shaken off those social fetters; leads a healthier and freer life than he could have done then; has amusements and luxuries which, in a profession, he could perhaps only have sighed for; and, what is more, can marry without inconvenience, as soon as the fated pair of eyes happen to look into his own. He has also this advantage over the regular village squire, that although his social circle is a limited one, it is not so limited as his. He sees a greater variety of human beings; he associates more with his fellow-creatures; he goes to market, and rubs up against cattle-dealers and corn-factors. On the other hand, he has, of course, the benefit of all the good society which his own neighbourhood affords. Thus he becomes more a man of the world, easier to get on with, and has fewer prejudices than his ostensible social superior. The family of such a man are pretty much what we can suppose the family of a well-to-do clergyman to be, if we eliminate the clerical aroma. His daughters are apt to be very charming: accomplished, and refined, with a sweet subdued air of country life about them, like the fragrance of a beanfield in June; great at croquet, picnics, and the conveyance of luncheon to shooting parties on a hazy hot September day. Here is your true Arcadia—especially when there are lots of birds!

The gentleman farmer number two is a far less desirable kind of man. In the first place, he is not a gentleman; in the second place, he is sure to be badly educated; in the third place, he is very likely to be both purse-proud and vulgar. He is, nine times out of ten, much fatter

than either of the other two grades. But fatness, with him, does not always mean good-humour. He is usually, however, of a jovial turn, and is fond of giving dinner-parties, which comprise the doctor, the squire's steward, the attorney from the next market town, and a brace of farmers like himself. They drink heady port-wine after dinner; then play at whist or loo, and have some final brandy-and-water before they retire. The women of his family have, of course, no pretension to be ladies. Here again, however, let it not be supposed that there are no exceptions to the rule. There are many. But we must hurry on to number three, the party we love best of all.

This is the farmer, "pure and simple"—may he forgive us for coupling his honest name with any such outlandish phrase; who rents his two, three, or five hundred acres, as the case may be, attends exclusively to his business, and aims at being nothing but what his fathers have ever been before him. It is in this class that vestiges of the old farmer character, shadows and faint echoes of Mr. Poyser, may still be traced. These are the men who still have faith in old ale, which they drink by sips; who like standing outside the church door after service with their hands in the pockets of their drab knee-breeches, to compare notes on crops and prices, and pay their duty to the vicar. These are they who, if you call upon them while out shooting, have the natural politeness to offer you only what they know to be good, namely, a jug of home-brewed, whereas the more genteel party insists upon "a glass of sherry." Even among tenant farmers, however, this particular kind of man is growing scarcer and scarcer. We can remember one or two in whose sons hunting was a high crime and misdemeanor, and whose daughters plied their fancy-work in fear and secrecy. When one of these old gentlemen wished to be especially bitter, he would address the son as "my lord," and the sister as "my lady," the latter, a pretty and lady-like girl enough, being occasionally goaded by his sarcasms into tucking up her sleeves and petticoats and scrubbing the floor till she was crimson. Heaven in its mercy removed the worthy man to a better sphere ere crinoline invaded his home: *id rebus defuit unum*. That would have brought his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. Still almost all these men belong to a past generation. Here and there, indeed, a man under forty may still be found who belongs to this class. But that is only in sequestered districts, where very primitive manners still linger among all ranks of the population. He is then rather a touching spectacle—a sort of Smike among farmers; the old-fashioned dress, the deferential manner, and the simplicity of ideas which sit pleasingly on the grey-haired sire, not appearing to equal advantage in the stalwart offspring. Generally the tenant farmer, though his manners and customs have altered of late years, is not intellectually much more advanced than his grandfathers. They differ, of course, very greatly among themselves; but the representative man is still guiltless of literature, little given to reflection, and slow to take an interest in novelties. There is, usually speaking, but little



affectation in him. He is civil, homely, and hospitable. The ancient manner, smacking as it did of the old feudal relation between a lord and his retainers, has disappeared simply because the relation has itself disappeared, though the shadow lingered long after the substance had departed. But still it has left behind it many of the old sterling virtues which we commonly associate with agriculture.

The farmer's connection with his landlord is now, however, almost wholly a commercial one; and since the repeal of the corn laws there is not even any one great interest which they share in common. Thus a certain reserve is frequently to be observed among the younger race of farmers, as of men who still desire to be perfectly courteous and accommodating, but who feel no longer quite that same sympathy with, and attachment towards, the gentleman, as such, which their fathers felt. They seem to wish you to comprehend that they stand upon their own bottom, and are obliged to nobody for anything. This makes intercourse with them less genial than it used to be; but it is part of the inevitable change which time has brought with it to all English society, and considering it from a purely rational point, there is no ground, perhaps, for grumbling. The change, however, has doubtless robbed the idea of the English farmer of much of its picturesqueness. Tweed trousers are not nearly so effective in point of colour as yellow leggings; nor is an increased rental and scientific agriculture a romantic exchange for that personal service which it was always supposed that the tenant would willingly have rendered. Not but what we think it very probable that, on many large estates to this day, the tenants would arm and fight under their landlord's banner in a cause which approved itself to their reason. But they would no longer accept their view of public affairs implicitly from him, or go out merely because he asked them.

The wives and daughters of these men, where they do not aspire to be fine ladies, are often very nice. But as a general rule we fear now-a-days that the old-fashioned idea of rustic beauty is seldom to be realized: a really pretty farmer's daughter of the class we are describing being quite as rare a bird as that creation of the poets, the lovely milkmaid. We expect to see a lovely mermaid quite as soon as this latter work of art, though we were bred up in a dairy county. Whether it is that these nymphs have all become extinct because the "fine gentlemen" from London, to whose amusement, a hundred years ago, they were necessary in the country, have become extinct also, and that in this way the supply has followed the demand, we cannot undertake to say. But they are not to be found now by gentle or simple. Still, a farmer's daughter, *when* pretty, is often very pretty indeed. Perhaps the nature of her occupations, and the aspect of the people round about her, afford a more than usually favourable contrast with a delicate skin, a clear pale complexion—

Like privet when it flowers—

a softly swelling contour and a lissome figure.

Such are the three chief classes into which farmers may be divided.

Of course they run into one another. But upon the whole we think they fairly represent the broader and more generic varieties of agricultural life. We will now, however, beg our readers to bear in mind that our remaining remarks must be understood upon the whole as applicable rather to the last-mentioned variety of the species than to the two former. Not but what, of course, they will have occasional reference to the entire class; but ~~not~~ <sup>usually</sup> the higher you ascend in the scale, the more does the farmer come to share in the attributes of a much larger segment of the social circle, and the less to be conspicuous for special humours and peculiarities.

It is often supposed that a country life is more favourable to the humanities than a town life: that it exercises more effectively the imaginative and contemplative faculties, and supplies healthier food to the generous qualities of our nature. This proposition as a whole we are not about to call in question. We would only remark that, in order to receive the full benefit which it ascribes to the spiritual atmosphere of a country life, a man must have a mind so constituted as to be able to absorb and assimilate it. Probably few men are quite destitute of the capacity to do this. But we believe that some are; and also that some occupations more than others are calculated as it were to close up our moral pores, and so to neutralize the operation of those external influences by which our neighbours are affected. Now it is obvious that a farmer's labours having a constant tendency to fix his attention upon the productive and lucrative aspects of the land he lives in, are so far calculated to blind his eyes to any other, and so to deaden his perception of that moral music which copse and hedgerow, meadow and corn-field, the stately elms and the lazy brook, are assumed by our present hypothesis to be capable of expressing. It is a curious circumstance, but it is nevertheless quite true, that it is commoner to hear the beauties of the country spoken of in an appreciative tone by a day-labourer than by a regular farmer. The farmer, no doubt, does imbibe a certain amount of wholesome influence from the scenes in which his life is passed; but the process is continually retarded, and the effects impaired, by the nature of his daily occupations. Just as we are often told that it is a very bad plan to teach children to read out of the Bible, because, by regarding it as a task-book, they lose not only reverence for its character, but also the power of appreciating in after life its great beauties; and just as Byron could never come to like Horace because he had been made to work at it as a text of scholarship, so the man absorbed in utilizing nature is more or less cut off from the point of view which reveals her best beauties. We must, therefore, be prepared to modify very much that estimate of agricultural character which is founded upon the softening and humanizing influences ~~to~~ which it is necessarily exposed.

It is likewise to be remembered that in farming there is less speculation than in other trades. By speculation we do not exactly mean gambling, but those wider possibilities both of expansion and invention, which belong to commerce. A new country opened up, a new process

or a new manufacture discovered, may make the fortunes of millions. Every man engaged in trade in ever so small a way has these possibilities before him. As every French private was said to carry a marshal's bâton in his knapsack, so, without much strain upon reality, may every little shopkeeper in England be said to carry in his pocket the chance of becoming a millionaire. That the spirit which is thus engendered in commercial men does often lead to ill results may be true enough, but still it undoubtedly tends to enlarge the mind, and to make it capable of taking in a longer chain of cause and effect. It warms the imagination, and habituates merchants of the higher class to look forward to remote results, and to see great events in their beginnings. But the farmer, in spite of all that chemistry and machinery have done for him, is still much of the *terre filius*.

*Agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro,  
Hic anni labor.*

He passes the year in the same round of toil. And partly, perhaps, from the regularity and rapidity with which immediate visible results follow upon all that he does, partly from the intensely *real* nature of his occupations, he acquires that strong *cui bono* turn of mind to which we have already referred, but from which, oddly enough, he is often supposed to enjoy some special immunity. We believe there is no class of men more thoroughly utilitarian in many points of view than farmers are, and were it not that this spirit is neutralized by another one presently to be mentioned, very curious changes might occur in the present state of rural politics. This sentiment colours all their ideas of religion and government, and often manifests itself in the most quaint and unexpected shapes. We recollect a little while ago hearing a farmer, probably above the average of his class in general intelligence, observe that in his opinion England ought to go to war at certain intervals, whether provoked to it or not. And what does the reader suppose was his reason for this way of thinking? It was not because war kept alive the martial spirit of the country, or caused us to be respected by other nations, or might make fresh conquests and colonies. Not at all; but simply because we *had an army*: which to pay, clothe, and feed without using seemed to him an absurdity. It was, then, in stable language, eating its head off: a process which was just as aggravating in the case of armies as of horses. Clearly it should be the wish of every true patriot that the frost of peace should break up after a time, and the soldier be saddled for the field to do something in return for his rations. Another still more striking example of the same tone of mind we remember to have witnessed during one of the two or three hard winters which followed each other in succession some few years ago. The hard frost had broken up with unusual suddenness, and a heavy flood had risen in less than four-and-twenty hours along the low-lying meadow country, where the scene of our anecdote is placed. Being out for a "constitutional" about four o'clock on a dismal January afternoon, we suddenly, on turning a corner, came upon the bulky figure of a man

clad in a large drab uppercoat, and leaning on the gate which opened into a small meadow now entirely under water. The man's countenance was indicative of great dissatisfaction: but there was something more than mere dissatisfaction visible on his broad red face. A look of vacant perplexity, a sort of struggling wish to interrogate the universe in general as to the meaning of its present phenomena, arrested our attention at once. ~~F~~ soon learned the cause of his bewilderment. He had, it appeared, for some months previously been putting out some sheep to graze at a village about ten miles off, not having room for them on his own farm. The day before the flood began he had brought them all the way home for the express purpose of quartering them in this particular meadow. They had hardly been turned in when it became necessary to bring them out again. This disposition of events our farmer professed himself wholly at a loss to interpret. "It seems so odd," he said more than once with the air of a deeply injured man. What *was* the use of this flood coming at that particular moment? It could serve no good end that he could see. And although he did not go so far as to assert openly that it was a special visitation on himself, his mind being incapable of coming to any such definite conclusion without much greater labour than he had yet expended on the subject; yet one could see that by reason of his inability to perceive its immediate purpose, some such half-formed thoughts were working uneasily in his brain, and that he was unconsciously asking himself whether, after all, it was possible that such things could be; and that a dead set *was* sometimes made against individuals by those mysterious and occult forces which were what people meant, he supposed, by nature, providence, or fate. The contemplation of this problem was evidently too much for him; his tea-time had arrived, we knew; but yet he stirred not; and we left him still gazing moodily over the dreary cold expanse of water which had marred in this inexplicable way his pastoral arrangements.

We have said that the utilitarian and materialistic spirit which is characteristic of farmers is counteracted by another and still more deeply rooted sentiment, which prevents the former one from having much effect upon their conduct. We mean that strong natural conservatism which, in the absence of exceptional causes, is always to be found in farmers. The immutability of the operations of nature, the certain recurrence of the seasons, the very permanence and stability of all the objects round about them, generate a *mental* habit which shrinks from any kind of change, and disposes men to rest in confidence under the shadow of immemorial traditions. With the dweller in towns, at all events in these latter days, everything, on the contrary, is undergoing perpetual transformation. The street in which he played as a boy is pulled down before he *grows* into a man. Old landmarks disappear in all directions. New churches, shops, and hotels rise almost "like exhalations." Everything around him breathes of progress, invention, expectation, and the greenness of what is to be. The farmer, on the other hand, still sees through every stage of life the same objects which saluted him in his

infancy. The old hills which looked down upon his birth attend him to his grave. The old foot-path over the brook, and across the pasture, and through the beans; the row of old trees with the half-dozen rooks' nests at the top; the very shape of each separate field, and the turns and twists of every hedge; remain as they have been for centuries, and are likely to be for centuries more. All breathe of repose, antiquity, immobility, and the sanctity of what is. The influence of this atmosphere (not to be confounded, be it remembered, with its æsthetic influences) shows itself upon the farmer in the growth of a lazy but still approving acquiescence in all existing institutions, and is strong enough to contend successfully with the rival element of his character which we have already described. He supposes that they're all right. Things in general, it strikes him, seem meant to last a long time: why not the Church, the Queen, and the House of Lords? Even the dissenting farmer is seldom inspired by any hostility towards the Church. Here and there, of course, he may be goaded by an injudicious parson into open war against her claims. But otherwise his dissent is only the bequest of former times, to which he adheres from habit, but without the slightest ill-feeling towards the Church, her ministers, her offices, or her rates.

Another cause of agricultural conservatism is rather negative than positive; we mean the comparative absence of those petty social jealousies which prevail so much in large towns. It never enters into the farmer's head that he ought to associate on equal terms with the squire or the clergyman. A great number of farmers still always go to the back-door, if they have occasion to call at either house. In this respect they are perfectly unassuming; but, at the same time, perfectly free from anything like servility or cringing. In fact, it is probable that their own self-respect is much better preserved by this course of conduct than by pushing their way into drawing-rooms, where even the best of them are not exactly ornamental. When the smart young tenant, in his turn-down collar, red scarf, and large pin, begins to talk upon professional subjects, such as stock, breeding, manure, and the like topics of elegant conversation, his remarks very often show more science than delicacy.

Farmers, however, on the whole, are, to use the slang language of the day, an eminently "good sort." Taken as a class, you find less affectation, less vulgarity—in a word, less snobbishness—among them than perhaps among any other one class of the community. In book knowledge they are certainly inferior, and their minds no doubt move more sluggishly than those of the inhabitants of cities. But, after all, if we exclude a very small circle, how much of the enjoyment of life consists either of literature or of keen intellectual contests? The farmer generally has good sense, good nature, and is always hospitable. He is not usually the kind of man one would care to travel with to Rome or Athens. But in his own house or his own fields he is often a capital companion, and always an unexceptionable host.

## Foreign Actors and the English Drama.

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**T**HAT our drama is extinct as literature, and our stage is in a deplorable condition of decline, no one will venture to dispute; but there are two opinions as to whether a revival is possible, or even probable, and various opinions as to the avenues through which such a revival may be approached. There are three obvious facts which may be urged against the suggestions of hope: these are, the gradual cessation of all attempts at serious dramatic literature, and their replacement by translations from the French or adaptations from novels; the slow extinction of provincial theatres, which formed a school for the rearing of actors; and, finally, the accident of genius on our stage being unhappily rarer than ever. In the face of these undeniable facts, the hopeful are entitled to advance facts of equal importance on their side. Never in the history of our stage were such magnificent rewards within the easy grasp of talent; never were there such multitudes to welcome good acting. Only let the dramatist, or the actor, appear, and not London alone but all England, not England alone but all Europe, will soon resound with his name. Dramatic literature may be extinct, but the dramatic instinct is ineradicable. The stage may be in a deplorable condition at present, but the delight in mimic representation is primal and indestructible. Thus it is that, in spite of people on all sides declaring that "they have ceased to go to the theatre," no sooner does an actor arise who is at all above the line, no sooner does a piece appear that has any special source of attraction, than the public flock to the theatre as it never flocked in what are called "the palmy days" of the drama. Fechter could play *Hamlet* for seventy consecutive nights: which to Garrick, Kemble, or Edmund Kean would have sounded like the wildest hyperbole; and the greatest success of Liston and Matthews seems insignificant beside the success of *Lord Dundreary*. There is a ready answer to such facts conveyed in the sneer at public taste, and the assertion that all intelligence has departed, leaving only a vulgar craving for "sensation pieces." It is a cheap sneer. There is a mistake respecting sensation pieces: it is not because intelligence has departed, and there is no audience for better things, but simply because the numbers of pleasure-seekers are so much increased; and at all times the bulk of the public has cared less for intelligence than for sensation, less for art than amusement. If intelligent people now go to witness inferior pieces, it is because better things are not produced; and sensation pieces, although appealing to the lowest faculties, do appeal to them effectively. If there are crowds to see the *Colleen Bawn* and the *Duke's Motto*, it is because these pieces are really good of their kind; the kind may be a low kind; but will any

one say that the legitimate drama has of late years been represented in a style to satisfy an intellectual audience? Who would leave the "comforts of the Saut-market" for the manifold discomforts of a theatre, unless some strong intellectual or emotional stimulus were to be given in exchange? and who can be expected to submit with patience to lugubrious comedy and impossible tragedy, such as has been offered of late years to the British public? What wonder, considering that these "higher efforts" had so dreary an effect, that even the intelligent public sought amusement in efforts which were not so exalted, but really did amuse? A public seeks amusement at the theatre, and turns impatiently from dreariness to Dunderiness. Let an Edmund Kean—or any faint approach to an Edmund Kean—appear to-morrow, and the public will rush to see him as they rushed to hear Jenny Lind: the mob, because they are easily pleased and will rush to see any one about whom the world is talking; the intelligent public, because they are always ready to welcome genius. The proof of this eagerness to welcome any exceptional talent is the success of Fechter and Ristori; and, in another direction, the proof of the deplorable condition of our stage is the success of Mdlle. Stella Colas. Fechter and Ristori are both accomplished actors; not great actors, but still, within the limits of their powers, possessed of the perfect mechanism of their art; gifted, moreover, with physical and intellectual advantages which render them admirable representatives of certain parts. Mdlle. Colas, on the contrary, though she is sweetly pretty, and has a sympathetic voice, and a great deal of untrained energy, is not yet an actress; there are only the possibilities of an actress in her.

The disadvantages of a language unfamiliar as a spoken language to the great bulk of the audience, and of companions who are scarcely on a level with the actors in the open-air theatres of Italy, have not prevented Ristori from achieving an immense success; nor have the terrible disadvantages of an intonation and pronunciation which play havoc with Shakspeare's lines prevented Fechter from "drawing the town." There is something of fashion in all this, of course; something to be attributed to the mere piquancy of the fact that Shakspeare is played by a French actor: but we must not exaggerate this influence. It may draw you to the theatre out of curiosity, but it will not stir your emotion when in the theatre, and will not bring down tumultuous applause at the great scenes. No sooner are you moved, than you forget the foreigner in the emotion. And the proof that it really is what is excellent, and not what is adventitious, which creates the triumph of Fechter in *Hamlet*, is seen in the supreme ineffectiveness of his *Othello*. In *Ruy Blas* and the *Corsican Brothers* he was recognized as an excellent actor—not by any means a great actor, very far from that; but one who in the present condition of the stage was considered a decided acquisition. He then played *Hamlet*, and gave a new and charming representation to a part in which no actor has been known to fail; and the uncritical concluded that he was a great actor. But when he came to a part like

*Othello*, which calls upon the greatest capabilities of an actor, the public then remembered that he was a foreigner, and discovered that he was not a tragedian. If he, or Mario, were to play *Romeo*, it is probable that the town would run after such a performance, not merely from curiosity, but from genuine delight in a representation which moved them.

I conclude, then, that there is a vast and hungry public ready to welcome and reward any good dramatist or fine actor; but in default of these, willing to be amused by *spectacles* and sensation pieces. Whether the dramatist or actor will arise, and by his influence create a stage once more, is a wider question. I shall not enter upon it here, nor shall I touch on the causes of the present condition. My purpose is rather to consider the suggestion which has been made of the probable influence of foreign actors upon our stage. Some have thought that here is an opportunity for our young actors to surprise many of the secrets of the art, and to unlearn some of their own conventional errors. In one sense this is plausible; for a young student, if at once gifted and modest, may undeniably learn much in the study of artists belonging to a wholly different school; especially if he can discriminate what is conventional in them, though unlike his own conventionalism. Nevertheless, on the whole, I think the gain likely to be small, just as the gain to our painters is small if they are early sent to Rome to study the great masters. They become imitators; and imitate what is conventional, or individual mannerism.

There is a mistake generally made respecting foreign actors, one, indeed, which is almost inevitable, unless the critic be extremely analytic, or has long been familiar with the foreign stage. I allude to the mistake of supposing an actor to be fresh and original because he has not the conventionalisms with which we are familiar on our own stage. He has those of his own. The traditions of the French, German, and Italian theatres thus appear to our unfamiliar eyes as the inventions of the actors; just as in our youth we thought it deliciously comic when the rattling young gentleman placed his cane on the gouty old gentleman's toe—a bit of "business" which now affects us with the hilarity of an old Joe Miller. When Emile Devrient played *Hamlet* with the German company, both he and the actor who took the part of *Polonius* were thought by our old playgoers to be remarkable artists, simply because the "business" was so very novel. But any one familiar with the German stage could have assured them that this business was all traditional, and could have pointed out the extremely mechanical style in which the parts were performed. It is true that English actors might have gained some hints from studying these representations; but only by discriminating those elements which truly belong to the characters from those which were German conventionalisms.

Thus, I do not know that under any circumstances the presence of foreign actors on our stage could have more than the negative influence of teaching our actors to avoid some of their conventionalisms. It could



only have a direct and positive influence in the case of real genius, which would display the futility of conventionalisms, and teach the actor to rely on sincerity of expression. When great effects are seen to be produced by the natural language of emotion, the intelligent actor loses his confidence in rant.

Passing from these general considerations to the special case of the foreign actors now on our stage, let us ask what probability is there of any good influence being derived from such models? Ristori is universally spoken of as the rival of Rachel: many think her superior. The difference between them seems to me the difference between talent and genius, between a woman admirable in her art, and a woman creative in her art. Ristori has complete mastery of the mechanism of the stage, but is without the inspiration necessary for great acting. A more beautiful and graceful woman, with a more musical voice, has seldom appeared; but it is with her acting as with her voice—the line which separates charm from profound emotion is never passed. When I saw her in *Lady Macbeth* my disappointment was extreme; none of the qualities of a great actress were manifested. But she completely conquered me in *Medea*; and the conquest was all the more noticeable, because it triumphed over the impressions previously received from Robson's burlesque imitation. The exquisite grace of her attitudes, the mournful beauty of her voice, the flash of her wrath, and the air of supreme distinction which seems native to her, gave a charm to this performance which is unforgettable. No wonder that people were enthusiastic about an actress who could give them such refined pleasure; and no wonder that few paused to be very critical of her deficiencies. I missed, it is true, the *something* which Rachel had: the sudden splendour of creative power, the burning-point of passion: yet I confess that I then thought it possible she might prove a more consummate comedian than Rachel, though so manifestly inferior to her in great moments. That supposition was a profound mistake. I discovered it on seeing *Adrienne Lecouvreur* the other night. The disappointment, not to say weariness, felt at this performance, caused me to recur to the disappointment felt at her *Lady Macbeth*: these performances marked a limit, and defined the range of her artistic power. In *Adrienne* there was still the lovely woman, with her air of distinction and her musical voice; but except in the recitation of the pretty fable of the two pigeons, the passage from *Phèdre*, and the one look of dawning belief brightening into rapture, as she is reassured by her lover's explanation, there was nothing in the performance which was not thoroughly conventional. Nor was this the worst fault. In the lighter scenes she was not only conventional, but committed that common mistake of conventional actors, an incongruous mixture of effects.

Let me explain more particularly what is meant by the term conventional acting. When an actor feels a vivid sympathy with the passion, or humour, he is representing, he personates, i. e. speaks through, the character; and for the moment is what he represents. He can do this only

in proportion to the vividness of his sympathy, and the plasticity of his organization, which enables him to give *expression* to what he feels; there are certain physical limitations in every organization which absolutely prevent adequate expression of what is in the mind; and thus it is that the dramatist can rarely personate one of his own conceptions. But within the limits which are assigned by nature to every artist, the success of ~~the~~ personation will depend upon the vividness of his sympathy, and his honest reliance on the truth of his own individual expression, in preference to the conventional expressions which may be accepted on the stage. This is the great actor, the creative artist. The conventional artist is one who either, because he does not feel the vivid sympathy, or cannot express what he feels, or has not sufficient energy of self-reliance to trust frankly to his own expressions, cannot *be* the part, but tries to *act* it, and is thus necessarily driven to adopt those conventional means of expression with which the traditions of the stage abound. Instead of allowing a strong feeling to express itself through its natural signs, he seizes upon the conventional signs, either because in truth there is no strong feeling moving him, or because he is not artist enough to give it genuine expression; his lips will curl, his brow wrinkle, his eyes be thrown up, his forehead be slapped, or he will grimace, rant, and "take the stage," in the style which has become traditional, but which was perhaps never seen off the stage; and thus he runs through the gamut of sounds and signs which bear as remote an affinity to any real expressions, as the pantomimic conventions of ballet-dancers.

A similar contrast is observed in literature. As there are occasionally actors who *personate*—who give expression to a genuine feeling—so there are occasionally writers, not merely litterateurs, who give expression in words to the actual thought which is in their minds. The writer uses words which are conventional signs, but he uses them with a sincerity and directness of individual expression which makes them the genuine utterance of *his* thoughts and feelings; the *littérateur* uses conventional phrases, but he uses them without the guiding instinct of individual expression; he tries to express what others have expressed, not what is really in his own mind. With a certain skill, the *littérateur* becomes an acceptable workman; but we never speak of him as a *writer*, never estimate him as a man of genius, unless he can make his own soul speak to us. The conventional language of *poetry* and *passion*, of *dignity* and *drollery*, may be more or less skilfully used by a writer of talent; but he never delights us with those words which come from the heart, never thrills us with the simple touches of nature—those nothings which are immense, and which make writing memorable.

In saying that Ristori is a conventional actress, therefore, I mean that with great art she employs the traditional conventions of the stage, and reproduces the effects which others have produced, but does not deeply move us, because not herself deeply moved. Take away her beauty, grace, and her voice, and she is an ordinary comedian; whereas Kean

and Pasta were assuredly neither handsome nor imposing in physique, and Rachel made a common Jewish physiognomy lovely by mere force of expression. In *Medea*, Ristori was conventional and admirable. In *Adrienne*, she was conventional and inartistic, for while the character was not personated, but simulated, it was simulated by conventional signs drawn from a totally wrong source. The comedy was the comedy of a *soubrette*; the playfulness had the *minauderie* of a frivolous woman, not the charm of a smile upon a serious face. It is a common mistake of conventional serious actors in comic scenes to imitate the "business" and manner of comic actors. The tragedian wishing to be funny, thinks he must approach the low comedy style, and is often vulgar, always ineffective, by his very efforts at being effective. Ristori might have learned from Rachel that the lighter scenes of *Adrienne* could be charming without once touching on the "business" of the *soubrette*; and playgoers who remember Helen Faucit, especially in parts like *Rosalind* (a glimpse of which was had the other night), will remember how perfectly that fine actress can represent the joyous playfulness of young animal spirits, without once ceasing to be poetical. The gaiety of a serious nature even in its excitement must always preserve a certain tone which distinguishes it from the mirth of unimpassioned natures: a certain groundswell of emotion should be felt beneath. The manner may be light, but it should spring from a deep soil. Just as we feel the difference between the comedy of Shakspeare and Moliere, even when most extravagant, and the comedy of Congreve and Scribe; there is a heartier laugh, but a more serious background. At any rate, the unity of effect which is demanded in all representation is greatly damaged when, as in the case of *Adrienne* represented by Ristori, instead of the playfulness of an impassioned woman, we have a patchwork of effects—a bit of a *soubrette* tacked on to a bit of the coquette, that again to a bit of the *ingénue*, and that to a tragic part. Ristori was not one woman in several moods, but several actresses playing several scenes.

Nevertheless, while insisting on her deficiencies, I must repeat the expression of my admiration for Ristori as a distinguished actress; if not of the highest rank, she is very high, in virtue of her personal gifts, and the trained skill with which these gifts are applied. And her failures are instructive. The failures of distinguished artists are always fruitful in suggestion. The question naturally arises, why is her success so great in certain plays, and so dubious in Shakspeare or the drama? It is of little use to say that *Lady Macbeth* and *Adrienne* are beyond her means; that is only re-stating the fact; can we not trace both success and failure to one source? In what is called the ideal drama, constructed after the Greek type, she would be generally successful, because the simplicity of its motives and the artificiality of its structure, removing it from beyond the region of ordinary experience, demand from the actor a corresponding artificiality. Attitudes, draperies, gestures, tones, and elocution which would be incongruous in a drama approaching more nearly to the

evolutions of ordinary experience, become, in the ideal drama, artistic modes of expression; and it is in these that Ristori displays a fine selective instinct, and a rare felicity of organization. All is artificial, but then all is congruous. A noble unity of impression is produced. We do not clamorously demand individual truth of character and passion; the ideal sketch suffices. It is only on a smaller scale what was seen upon the Greek stage, where the immensity of the theatre absolutely interdicted all individualizing; spectators were content with masks and attitudes where in the modern drama we demand the fluctuating physiognomy of passion, and the minute individualities of character. When, however, the conventional actress descends from the ideal to the real drama, from the simple and general to the complex and individual in personation, then she is at a disadvantage. Rachel could make this descent, as all will remember who saw her *Adrienne* or *Lady Tartuffe*; but then Rachel *personated*, she spoke through the character, she suffered her inward feelings to express themselves in outward signs; she had not to cast about her for the outward signs which conventionally expressed such feelings. She had but a limited range; there were few parts she could play; but those few she personated, those she created. I do not believe that Ristori could personate; she would always seek the conventional signs of expression, although frequently using them with consummate skill.

If what I have said is true, it is clear that the gain to our stage from the study of such an actress would be small. Her beauty, her distinction, her grace, her voice, are not imitable; and nowhere does she teach the actor to rely on natural expression. Still more is this the case with Fechter, an artist many degrees inferior to Ristori, yet an accomplished actor in his own sphere. With regard to Mdlle. Stella Colas, had as our actors are, they have nothing to learn from her. As I said, she is very pretty, and has a powerful voice; but her performance of *Juliet*, which seems to delight so many honest spectators, is wholly without distinction. During the first two acts one recognizes a well-taught pupil, whose play is very good, and whose youth and beauty make a pleasant scenic illusion. The balcony scene, though not at all representing Shakespeare's *Juliet*, was a pretty and very effective bit of acting. It was mechanical, but skilful too. It assured me that she was not an actress of any spontaneity; but it led me to hope more from the subsequent scenes than she did effect. Indeed, as the play advanced, my opinion of her powers sank. No sooner were the stronger emotions to be expressed than the mediocrity and conventionalism became more salient. She has great physical energy, and the groundlings are delighted with her displays of it; nor does the monotony of her vehemence seem to weary them, more than the inartistic redundancy of effort in the quieter scenes. She has not yet learned to speak a speech, but tries to make every line emphatic. Partly this may be due to the difficulty of pronouncing a foreign language; but not wholly so, as is shown in the redundancy of gesture and "busi-

ness." Her elocution would be very defective in her own language; and its least defect, to my apprehension, is the imperfection of her English accent. With all her vehemence, she is destitute of passion; she "splits the ears of the groundlings," but moves no human soul. Her looks, tones, gestures—all have the well-known melodramatic unreality; and if a British public riotously applauds her energetic passages, it is but justice to that public to say that it *also* applauds the ranting *Romeo*, and other amazing representatives of the play.

With regard to the young actress herself about whom I am forced to speak thus harshly, I see so much *material* for future distinction, that I almost regret this early success. So much personal charm, so much energy, and so much ambition, may even yet carry her to the front ranks; but at present, I believe that every French critic would be astonished at the facility with which English audiences have accepted his young countrywoman; and he would probably make some derogatory remarks upon our insular taste. I do not for one moment deny her success—I only point to its moral. The stage upon which such acting could be regarded as excellent is in a pitiable condition. It is good mob acting: charming the eye and stunning the ear. The audiences have for so long been unused to see any truer or more refined representation, that they may be excused if, misled by the public press, and the prestige attached to the young Frenchwoman because she is French, they go prepared to see something wonderful, and believe that a *Juliet* so unlike anything they have ever seen is really a remarkable representation. The applauders find their more intelligent friends unwilling to admit that Mdlle. Colas is at present anything more than a very pretty woman, and peevishly exclaim, "Hang it! you are so difficult to please." But I believe that were the stage in a more vigorous condition, there would be no difference of opinion on this point. If Mdlle. Colas finds easy admirers, it is because, as the Spaniards say, in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed is king.

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## “Mrs. Archie.”

### I.

THE dwelling-house at Glenrig lay towards the sea, under sheltering hills, in a mountainous nook of the county Antrim. It was a romantic old place, and, of course, a legend clung to it. The story ran that a mysterious treasure lay secreted somewhere within the walls, supposed to have been hidden, ages since, on the occasion of a visit paid to the mountains by Cromwell's soldiers. The Mistress MacArthur of that day had given a ball on a certain night, and danced until a late hour, in a yellow satin gown and a quantity of jewels. Early next morning the unwelcome visitors had arrived, and the family fled empty-handed, but no jewels had been seen in the house, neither then, nor ever afterwards. Therefore, the gossips held, some secret hiding-place had been resorted to, and one day a prize must come to light. The legend of the treasure had passed down through many generations, but latterly it had almost died out. One old woman in the neighbourhood, who claimed descent from a confidential servant of the above-mentioned Mistress MacArthur, had pretended to know the exact spot where the treasure lay, and all the circumstances of its burial. But this old woman belonged to a spiteful race, and would never tell her secret, if secret she possessed.

Aunt Penelope believed in it, and she had tried many plans to find out whether or not old Nannie knew more than she knew herself. There was no end to the sneers she encountered from aunt MacAlister on the subject of her credulity; but, whether from charity, or with a view of conciliating old Nannie, she did induce aunt Janette to take home, as playfellow for Letitia, a little girl, the old woman's grandchild. However, the girl had turned out badly and been sent away, after which old Nannie and she had left the country, so that there was no longer a chance for aunt Penelope's craze of finding the treasure being satisfied.

And, indeed, this present family seemed about as little likely to discover it as any of their predecessors. Old Randal MacArthur, who had been visited with paralysis, was deaf, and had never quite recovered the use of his limbs, sat constantly in his chair, a patient cheerful Christian, willing to linger on among his children and his clan of friends as long as it pleased Heaven to leave him, but dreading nothing upon earth so much as change of any kind. His wife—"aunt Janette," as she was called by some scores of nephews and nieces—was a little, low-voiced woman, scarcely less noiseless than her own shadow. Her daughters, Mary and Rachel, were each a fair copy of their mother—not in person, but in the placidity of their tempers, and the unwearied quietude of their demeanour. All three









ARRIVAL OF THE BRIDE.



would have been terrified at the thought of breaking in on the still routine of their life by pulling down walls or dragging up floors in search of a thing the chances of whose existence hung on a legend. Letitia laughed at it. She was an orphan whom old Randal had claimed in her infancy by virtue of some mythical fifty-sixth cousinship, and had brought up as his youngest daughter. She was a busy spirit, quick in her motions, clear in her judgment, ready with her help, and, consequently, in sleepy Glenrig the household fairy, the ordering genius of the place from garret to cellar. She loved the old story, and laughed at it; pulled it to pieces one day, and put it together again the next, dressing it up in the most brilliant colours.

The only person who might have shown any energy in the matter was Archie, the eldest of the family, and only son of the house, who was at present trying to make his way at the English bar; and, spite of his Irish tongue and his Irish birth, was making it. But his energies and ambition had found a more practical channel than among broken walls bedded with imaginary treasure. Archie had enough to do, for the MacArthurs had been waxing poorer of late years, and he had gone forth to make for himself an independent name and fortune. Had the making of this fortune not been necessarily a tedious process, some thought that a certain pair of bright eyes which kept Glenrig in mischief and sunshine would have been even now shining beside him in London. However, people only surmised. The only one who could say anything on the subject was Letitia, and she—who could be discreet, "close," aunt Penelope said, when it pleased her—she, Letitia, kept her own counsel.]

The two aunts were frequent visitors, not dwellers, at Glenrig, having each her respective domicile on a different outskirt of the two miles' distant village of Cushlake. Aunt MacAlister was a MacArthur, who had made a not very brilliant marriage, and who, having been left a widow, had returned, as it were, to the parent stem, and always prominently asserting herself as Randal MacArthur's sister thought she ought to hold her head very high, and did so accordingly. Now aunt Penelope was only the wife of a dead brother, and her family being, in aunt MacAlister's opinion, "very low," that good-natured sister-in-law thought she should, on her husband's decease, have modestly retired into her native obscurity. But in addition to the enormity of her declining to do this, she had succeeded in "worming herself" into the good graces of everybody at Glenrig, and this was a mortal offence to aunt MacAlister, whom nobody liked. And so "aunt Pen" and "aunt Mac" were always at daggers-points, something as may be a snarling terrier, ready to snap at every one's heels, and a purring cat who will lie coisly by the fire as long as she is left at peace, but will show the tiger when provoked.

It happened one evening, early in spring, that a small event occurred which, for a time, quickened mightily the blood in the drowsy Glenrig veins, and which, as it afterwards proved, was looked back upon as an epoch in the lives of all concerned. It was twilight, and Glenrig glared

with all its red windows into the outer grayness, where the valley at its feet had assumed a mysterious depth, and the ranks of opposite mountains had retreated, in ghostly fashion, into the clouds. The great brown trees, their first awkward effort at greenness extinguished by the dusk, stood like bearded giants resting on their clubs, for a short truce had been concluded with the gales. Inside uncle Randal and aunt Janette were sitting, or musing, which you please, in their respective arm-chairs at either side of the hearth, and the firelight flushed over them, filling the cosy old-fashioned room with a deep crimson light. A light step came in, and Letitia crossed the floor hastily, crying, "Aunt Janette, here are the letters—the letters at last. One, two, three; and there's one from Archie. I'll light the lamp!"

The lamp was lit in a twinkling, and as Letitia stood in the sudden light we could not have a better opportunity for describing her. It was a slight, small figure, clothed in a housewifely gray dress, and black silk apron. She looked like one accustomed to carry the keys, but to carry them jauntily, making them as piquante an accessory to her own picturesque as any piece of *bijouterie* that ever fine lady hung on her finger or slung to her girdle. Letitia was not a beauty, but she could look pretty at times, and any woman who can do so should be content. It was a round face with intelligent eyes, rather amber than brown; a nose, short, and not ungraceful; a wide mouth with the merit of red lips and pure teeth; and a low broad forehead. Her hair, which was simply sombre, without either purple lights or ebon gloss, was folded smoothly from her brow, and hung in a heavy cloud about her throat. She did look pretty now, with a sudden jewel burning in each eye, and a throb of excitement reddening her cheek.

She sat down to read Archie's letter to his father and mother. She began heartily—"My dear mother——" She glanced down the page, and repeated mechanically, "My dear mother."

"Well, Letitia?"

"My eyes are dim, somehow," said Letitia. "I have got a headache. Just let me run up for Mary or Rachel. They will read it better."

And not waiting to be gainsayed, she sprang up and vanished.

"Rachel," she said, putting her head in at the door of a room upstairs where a young lady was arranging her hair at the glass, "there is a letter from Archie, and your mother wants you to read it for her. My head aches so badly, I cannot look at the paper."

Strange to say, the light on Rachel's table glared at Letitia like a bloodthirsty enemy, and Rachel herself, soft, quiet Rachel, looked a gorgon. Blissfully unconscious of this fact, however, that young lady made a moderate exclamation of pleasure at hearing of her brother's letter, and telling Letitia to bathe her head, went downstairs. And Rachel read the letter. It ran like this:—

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I fear my father and you will be displeased at first when I tell you that I have been married for some time, but when you know my Ethelind you

must forgive me. Knowing this, I have induced her to go on before me, on a visit to Glenrig. I have assured her of the affectionate welcome she will have. I need not ask you, dearest mother, to treat her tenderly for my sake. I hope Mary, Rachel, and Letitia will be sisters to her. I will join her at Glenrig in a few weeks hence.

—Your affectionate son,

ARCHIBALD MACARTHUR.

Rachel let fall the paper, and blank amazement dropped down upon the listeners. Then sobbing and murmuring arose in a chorus of meek rebellion against fate and Archie, till Letitia presently brought her bright face back to the room, and laughing merrily at the "comical news" struck the key-note for a new strain, and set the weepers all chanting the praises of the dear offender, with only a low running accompaniment of regrets and fears, and gentle deprecations.

Some days passed, and it was the evening of the bride's expected arrival. The shock at Archie's strange conduct had in some measure subsided, and it had been resolved to give the visitor a true glens welcome. So the old house had been burnished up to its best looks, and early in the evening a goodly company of friends, all cousins to the nineteenth degree, had assembled in Mrs. MacArthur's drawing-room. The curtains were drawn across the shuttered windows, the fire blazed up the chimney, and the round table at the side of the room was absolutely groaning under delectable preparations for a plentiful tea. The room was filled with good-humoured, good-looking people, laughing and talking in the broad northern accent, which has so ludicrously little of the mincing about it, and so much of rough honest kindliness.

Old Randal MacArthur sat in his arm-chair as usual, a spare little man, with a thin rosy face, and a quick and kindly eye. He wore a black velvet cap on his almost bald head, and sat in the familiar attitude which betrayed his deafness, holding his hand behind his ear while he leaned upon the arm of his chair towards the company, looking from one face to the other as if he would guess by their expression, if he could not hear, all that was going forward.

His wife was in her customary place near to his side, with her small grave cap and small grave gown, and her thin timid face, looking like a rather stately little old maid in half-mourning. She also sat with her feet on a stool, and she wore her dress short, and large bright buckles on her shoes. Also on her shoulders a black velvet shawl, rich with fringe and embroidery, said to have cost a fabulous sum of money once upon a time : how long ago we cannot say, but aunt Penelope was wont to declare that sister Janette could not wear out her clothes like other folks, do as she would.

A small crowd of broad-shouldered, brown-faced cousin Edmunds, cousin Randals, cousin Pats, and cousin Archies straggled about a table where a group of young women sat at work. "Young women" aunt MacAlister resolutely dubbed them, and young women they were obliged to submit to be. Bead-work had not at the time we speak of quite superseded shirt-making and garter-knitting in retired nooks of the world like

Glenrig; and of this laughing bevy, all busy with fingers and tongues, one was stitching a shirt-collar, another hemming damask napkins, whilst a third was netting—horrible to relate—a nightcap for her father. In this group were Mary and Rachel, the daughters of the house, with their low voices and few words. They were too quiet. Aunt Penelope once exclaimed in despair, "Sister Janette, can you do nothing to waken up these girls of yours? They're just no better than white mice!"

Aunt MacAlister betrayed her kill-joy propensities by her sharp eyes, long pinched nose, and puckered-up mouth. She was dressed in a black satin gown, very stiff, wore black silk mittens on her hands, and a severe Quaker-looking cap on her head. She was not perhaps, in the main, a bad-natured woman; but she always acted as though she lived in mortal dread lest any one should suspect that she possessed one drop of the milk of human kindness in her nature. She was particularly hard upon the "young women" now around her, calling their talk "clattering," and their ribbons and muslins "fudgey-magiggery." She had also a stab at the broad-shouldered cousins, whom she did not scruple to describe as "louts," telling of the elegant manners of the gentlemen whom she was accustomed to meet in Dublin, in her youth.

Aunt Penelope was an ample, plain-featured person, with no particular physical advantage beyond the beaming effulgence that could flood from her nondescript eyes, and irradiate her broad buff-coloured face. And we do not think aunt Mac need have called her vulgar because she preferred a brown and gold-colour brocaded gown to one of a more severely neutral description of tint; or, having been a widow for twenty years, because she liked a comfortable cap with a bit of colour about it. Be that as it may, aunt Pen was the favourite, the confidante, the coaxed and familiar of the whole clan. She knew all the secrets of the young men, and all the secrets of the young women, all but one. She was wont to declare to herself that she never could make anything of Letitia. Her eyes were now following that young damsel, as, dressed in black silk and a coral necklace, she fitted in and out and about the room, looking after the setting forth of cakes and preserves, and seeming to make a hundred excuses to keep moving about, as if she could not rest quiet a moment.

The rolling of a carriage was presently heard, and a crunching of wheels on the gravel. A sudden silence fell on the room. The cousins stopped laughing, Mary and Rachel glanced at one another, and looked more like white mice than ever; uncle Randal sank back in his chair; aunt Janette rose and stood nervously dragging the fringe of her shawl; aunt Mac bounced up and looked around as if to say, "Now we shall see what kind of person Mrs. Archie is?" Whereupon aunt Pen slipped into her chair, taking old Randal's hand kindly, and still watching Letitia. That young person, at the moment employed in cutting thin bread and butter, laid down her knife, and walking over to where Mrs. MacArthur stood irresolute on the hearth-rug, slipped the old lady's arm through her own and drew her on, saying, "Come, aunt Janette, you must meet her at

the door, you know!" "Forward minx!" hissed aunt Mac, sotto voce. "Bravo, Letitia!" murmured aunt Pen under her breath.

In another minute the stranger stood under the hall lamp, and was embraced by aunt Janette. It was not noticed that when Letitia's turn came she retreated into the shadows, and pushed Mary forward to be kissed. Nor was it seen that when the visitor was conducted to her room, Letitia remained below on the mat, twisting her small fingers together, as if she would break them in pieces.

In due time Mrs. Archie made her appearance in the drawing-room, taking away every one's breath by her brilliance. She was dressed in bright blue silk, all flounces and trimmings, and wore delicate lace and glittering ornaments. She was slight, and tall, and carried her finery with a charming grace. She had that kind of fair-haired, fair-eyed good looks, which becoming dress and vivacity of character may burnish into fascinating beauty. If dressed in dull hues, and shorn of her little airs and graces, she would have been too pale and pink about the eyes, while her hair would have displayed that lack-lustre tint which can only be warmed to gold by delicate surroundings of colour. So at least thought aunt Penelope, as, quite forgetting politeness, she sat watching her with unflinching persistence, seeming to have quite overlooked Letitia in her new interest in the bride.

"Won't you come to the fire, Mrs. Archie?" "Mrs. Archie, won't you sit to the table for your tea?" "Mrs. Archie, dear, you're fairly done out!" "'Deed, Mrs. Archie, you're ready to drop this minute for want of something to eat. Oh! you needn't tell me. I know the hungry road you've travelled better than you do. You ought to be gay and keen for your tea!"

Such speeches as these assailed the new-comer on all sides; but after she had spoken once or twice, and shaken out her flounces as many times, the majority of the clan got rather more shy, and did not press their kindnesses on her so strongly: she was very condescending, very gracious, very lavish with her smiles and her pretty gestures; but somehow the plain glensfolk, with their quaint downright talk and their homely ways, felt ill at ease with her, feeling vaguely that she was rather too fine a lady for Archie to have sent home to Glenrig. Old Randal presently lay back, extinguished, in his chair. Aunt Janette by-and-by also retreated into retirement. Of the cousins, the male portion attended on her wants rather clumsily, and the female portion scrutinised her dress and the style of her hair.

Aunt Mac, who considered from the first that Mrs. Archie had "an air about her," made friends with her at once; perhaps because the bride evidently did not much affect aunt Penelope. And so she sat all evening by her side, and in return for Mrs. Archie's gracious information about "high circles" in London, aunt Mac entertained her with an account of the "elegant people" whom she used to meet "in Dublin, in her youth." And still aunt Penelope watched the bride, scrutinising

untiringly face, hands, figure, manner, and closing her eyes sometimes to listen more keenly to the tones of the stranger's voice.

"Sister Janette," said aunt Penelope, when the cousins were going away, "if you have a spare bed I'll stay. I have a mind not to go home to-night."

This was only aunt Penelope's way of putting it, for she knew there were plenty of spare beds at Glenrig; and she stayed.

At twelve o'clock that night Letitia was sitting at the fire in her own room, when aunt Penelope came in, shut the door, and stood beside her on the hearth. Now on this night of all others Letitia did not want even aunt Penelope in her room. Nevertheless, there she was.

"How do you like her?" aunt Pen began, poking up the fire briskly.

"Oh! well enough, I suppose!" replied Letitia. "She's a very grand lady indeed."

"Isn't she a beauty now? Did you ever see as pretty a creature?"

"She's good-looking enough!" said Letitia dryly, "but I can't say I admire her much."

Aunt Penelope looked at her with twinkling eyes. "What makes you so cross to-night, Letitia?"

"Cross! I cross? I'm not cross, aunt Penelope!"

"Well, you're something very like it. However, I'm not going to torment you, you close little thing! I suppose if I said you 'poor' little thing you'd tear my eyes out. There, sit still! Letitia, do you remember Bessie Anderson?"

"Bessie! Bessie, who used to play with me long ago?"

"Yes, that very Bessie. Do you remember her?"

"Of course I do."

"How old were you when she went away?"

"About nine, I think."

"And she was three years older. That is ten years ago. Do you recollect why she was sent away from this?"

"Not very well. For some bad conduct, I think."

"It was for forging a letter," said aunt Penelope—"a letter from her schoolmaster to aunt Janette, asking for the loan of some money, which she, Miss Bessie, having got to bring to him, expended on sweetmeats. Tell me now, Letitia, what was she like, as you remember her?"

"Why, of course, I don't recollect her very distinctly, but I know she was a pale girl with fair hair. But, dear me! aunt Penelope, you must remember all about her yourself a great deal better than I can. What has put her in your head to-night?"

"Hold your tongue, my dear, and never mind, but go to bed and rest your poor little worried brains. Your wits aren't so bright these days, Letitia, as they used to be: but you can't help that, poor lamb. There, good night!"

And giving her a hearty kiss, aunt Pen walked off to her own chamber. There she doffed her glowing cap and put on her night-cap;



but having got thus far in her preparations for her couch, she rolled herself up in a great shawl, and taking her candle in hand, went straight downstairs again to the dining-room, not the drawing-room. This dining-room was situated at the extreme end of the hall, and attained by a low flight of steps and a landing. It was a long room, with high wainscots and red hangings. Here she coolly lit the lamp, and ensconcing herself in an arm-chair at the table, deliberately began to read. The fire had gone out, but aunt Penelope had provided herself with a shawl.

She sat for about an hour or more, now and again looking at her watch, and glancing towards the door. After two o'clock had struck, and she had begun to shift about uneasily in her chair, the door softly opened, and Mrs. Archie appeared with a candle in her hand. She was in a white dressing-gown, with her hair twisted up for the night, and her looks at this moment justified aunt Penelope's preconceived opinion, that shorn of the becoming blue of her dress, the glitter of her ornaments, and the sparkle of her gaiety, the fair "Ethelind" would be a "common-enough" looking person!

"Goodness gracious, Mrs. Archie!" exclaimed aunt Penelope, putting down her book; "what has scared ye? I thought you'd have been sound asleep two hours ago, after your journey!"

Mrs. Archie was profuse in her explanations. She had been looking for the drawing-room, having left her reticule there. She had such a terrific headache, she could not sleep. Her snelling-salts, which always relieved her, were in the reticule. She begged pardon of aunt Penelope, whose delightful studies, no doubt, rewarded her for a loss of sleep, &c. &c.

Mrs. Archie hastily withdrew. Then aunt Pen pushed away her book, gathered her shawl round her, and got up with her candle. But before she left the room she walked round the walls, passing her hand over the wainscot at intervals, and sometimes peering into the cracks and lines with the candle close to the wood. After this inspection she shook her head warily, smiled to herself, and went off to her room.

Next morning, to the dismay of many present, aunt Mac made her appearance at the breakfast-table. On the night before she had just been mounting the steps of her "inside car" ("aunt Mac's shanderadan," some sly cousin had been known to call it), when the echo of aunt Pen's announcement to stay the night reached her preternaturally sharp ears. She had at once descended, and, re-entering the house, had informed aunt Janette that the air was so keen she feared a return of toothache, from which she had suffered so much ten years ago. She would, therefore, inhabit a second of the Glenrig spare bed-rooms for the night.

"It was a clever stroke of Mrs. Pen!" soliloquized she, as she betook herself to her chamber. "A clever stroke, but she forgets that she has Sabina MacAlister to deal with." It was a good idea to try and get the start of me in that way, but I'll let her see that I mean to keep my ground

with Mrs. Archie, who is a very superior person, and, I am sure, despises her wheedling ways!" Whilst kept waking by the energy of these valiant resolves, aunt Mac had heard a step in the passage, and peeping from her door had been just in time to see the top of aunt Penelope's nightcap disappearing down the stairs. This little circumstance had added a tinge of mystery to aunt Pen's audacious conduct; and at the end of the two hours which had elapsed before her step ascended the stair again, aunt Mac had been in a perfect frenzy of curiosity.

However, in the morning there was aunt Penelope punctual at the early breakfast-table, as fresh and as pleasant as a very large and fully blown cabbage rose, and quite unimpressed by aunt Mac's extra austere glances, and the extra acid tones of aunt Mac's voice. The day proved wet, and in the drawing-room uncle Randal had his paper, whilst aunt Janette studied a book called *Christian Perfection* in the opposite arm-chair. Mary and Rachel sat at their work-table, and each uttered half-a-dozen phrases between breakfast and dinner. Mrs. Archie, after delighting aunt Mac for an hour with her elegant conversation, had produced a novel, and ensconced herself comfortably in a sofa, with her becoming drapery swelling in silken billows around her. Letitia had found so much to do elsewhere that she could not contrive to make herself visible in the drawing-room for more than five minutes at a time. And so the two aunts sat opposite to one another, each engaged in knitting, aunt Mac with thin needles of cold blue steel, and aunt Pen with large comfortable wooden ones, with sealing-wax heads, which she bestowed away under her arms, while she plied her work with many a click and clack.

During the course of the day Mrs. Archie chanced to lay down her novel and go out of the room. A few minutes afterwards aunt Penelope wound up her ball, and fastened it into its little basket with the hole for the cotton to run through, stuck her needles into her work, and also left the room.

"I was thinking, Mrs. Archie," she said, entering the dining-room, "that you'd be, maybe, writing a line to your good man; and as I've a letter to send to the post myself, the same messenger could take yours and mine to Cushlake together."

Mrs. Archie, who was deeply engaged in studying the pictures on the wall, said, "Oh, thank you; I will write it at once!" and tripped off to her own room.

"Rather queer," mused aunt Pen as she marched round by the wainscot again, like a general reviewing the strength of his batteries. "Rather queer for a young bride to need to be reminded of writing to her husband by an old wife like me!"

"I have left it on the hall-table," said Mrs. Archie, fluttering into the drawing-room.

And aunt Pen went off to deposit her own letter beside the bride's. She lifted up Mrs. Archie's dainty little note, and surveyed it back and front, and read the direction over at least twenty times--

"Archibald MacArthur," it ran, "19, Butterfly Terrace, Brompton, London, S.W."

Well, Mrs. Penelope, and what is there so strange about that? Is it not your nephew's correct address, the address of his lodging where he exists during the intervals between his periods of living interment in the Temple? Oh, yes, Mrs. Penelope says, but that is precisely what puzzles me! Then she takes a letter from her pocket—Archie's letter to his mother—and spreads it out upon the table, and peeps into the writing, and then again into that on the envelope addressed by the fair Ethelind. Never was there a prettier contrast. One, bold, clear, a little rugged, with here and there a mischievous curve curling up like a laugh; very suggestive of Archie. The other, fine, weak, slanting, pretty—just the handwriting for a dainty, fair-complexioned bride, who reads novels, and wears blue silk and laces. The result of aunt Pen's inspection is a twinkle of the eyes, and she goes back to her knitting.

"Now what is she plotting and planning?" ejaculated aunt MacAlister that night, when she found herself in her own room. "She keeps coming and going, and smiling to herself, and her eyes keep twinkling while she rattles those great coarse vulgar needles of hers! And she keeps watching that sweet, elegant creature, just as a cat does a mouse. And no one sees it—oh, dear, no! Randal might be blind as well as deaf, and as for Janette, she's as ignorant as a baby of everything but the Lives of the Saints and Randal's ailments.

Soliloquizing thus at a late hour, aunt Mac, who had purposely left her door ajar, heard aunt Pen's soft step going past again, as on the night before. She at once got up, and shaking with hurry and overflowing with curiosity, dressed and went downstairs. After trying several dark rooms, she at last made her way to the dining-room, where she was so astounded at seeing aunt Penelope and Mrs. Archie together, that she sunk into a chair with a little spasmodic shriek. Whereupon aunt Penelope turned from the table where she was standing, closed the door softly, and said pleasantly—

"Keep quiet, if you please, aunt Mac. Mrs. Archie and I are just looking for a reticule of hers that she's apt to mislay of nights. But there's no need to wake up the house about it. I think, Mrs. Archie, we'll give it up for to-night."

The bride was standing near the wainscot with her candle on a chair beside her. She looked pale and cross as she took her light and prepared to go.

"Mistress Penelope!" burst forth aunt Mac, "I don't pretend to know why you think proper to walk about the house at nights scaring quiet people in their beds. Of course it's nothing to me—I'm nobody—but I wonder you're not ashamed to rout up a young creature like that—a guest in the house—a—a—" Here aunt Mac choked with anger for a moment. "Mrs. Archie," she went on, very politely, "will you do me the favour of leaning on my arm, and allowing me to conduct you to your

chamber? As I'm a MacArthur myself, I may speak for my brother in my brother's house. I am distressed that your slumbers should have been so intruded upon."

This was no doubt the style of diction indulged in by aunt Mac, "in Dublin in her youth." Mrs. Archie graciously and timidly accepted her protection, and aunt Pen was left smiling at her candle in the dining-room alone.

"I do positively think," said aunt Mac, as she prepared a second time for rest, "I do believe that foolish, superstitious woman has begun again to her old nonsense about that treasure. 'Treasure, indeed! As if wiser than she is would not have found it long ago if it had been there! As if the MacArthurs themselves did not know their own affairs best! Oh, that's what she's plotting and planning about! And I'll stake my head that she's trying to coax or worry that nice Mrs. Archie into her clutches. She wants her help in some way or other. Perhaps to use her influence with Archie to get the house pulled down. What else could have brought her below these two nights and Mrs. Archie with her? But trust a real MacArthur for finding out her plots! Oh, I'll stake my head upon it!"

What, aunt Mac! with the rigid cap, and the MacArthur nose, and the fine plaited front and all? Take care, aunt Mac. And yet she would have been willing to stake her hands in addition, if she could have seen aunt Penelope at that moment, as she stood smiling over a sharp instrument with a handle, which she had found among the chairs near where Mrs. Archie had stood, close by the wainscot.

## II.

ANOTHER day arrived, and neither of the aunts made any sign of returning to her town residence at Cushlake; aunt Pen stayed and aunt Mac stayed.

"Oh! I certainly expect a letter to-day," warbled Mrs. Archie, in answer to a query put by some one at the breakfast-table.

Aunt Pen was not much in the drawing-room that morning, and it chanced that she got the letter-bag first, and carried it with her to her own room. Arrived there, we are afraid the reader will be shocked to learn her next proceeding. Having found a letter addressed in her nephew's writing to "Mrs Archibald MacArthur, Glenrig, Cushlake, co. Antrim," she held it over a dish of hot water, and opened it easily. She then took out the enclosure and read it. Having done so, a smile overspread aunt Penelope's round face—a smile so broad, that some people, seeing it, would have concluded that a crown, or a fortune at least, had been laid at her feet. Having finished reading, she coolly looked up the letter in a box, and folding a sheet of blank paper placed it in the envelope. Then she sat down and wrote a letter, addressed to the Temple, London, which she carried away and sent off to Cushlake to the post; and after completing all these arrangements, she introduced the letter-bag to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Archie retired to her own room to read her letter. On her

return, aunt Penelope hoped her nephew Archie was very well. "Oh, yes!" Ethelind assured her, as she nestled among her flounces again with her novel. "Oh, yes, very well, very well indeed!"

"Archie is beginning to write a great deal better than he did," remarked Rachel, taking up the envelope which Mrs. Archie had left ostentatiously upon the table. "This is not so hurried as he used to write; it is very nice and fine." The bride's cheeks grew a shade pinker, and aunt Penelope smiled, but no one answered Rachel's observation.

Three nights passed, during which Mrs. Archie never once had occasion to come down searching for her reticule after twelve o'clock, and the two aunts were suffered to skirmish about the house in their nightcaps, and come in collision with their candles in dark rooms to their hearts' content. But on the fourth night, when aunt Pen was in the act of screwing up her curl-papers, she heard a 'click' at her door, and discovered that she was locked into her room. Finding this, she sat down upon the nearest chair and indulged in a hearty fit of laughter. "Well done!" she ejaculated, wiping her eyes, "very well done indeed! You're a cleverer woman, my dear Mrs. Archie, than even I gave you credit for!"

Aunt MacAlister, who also found her door locked, was not so amiable over the discovery, but fumed about her room in a fury at the impudence, the audacity, the cunning of that low-bred woman. But she would be even with her, she vowed she would. She would bide her time and outwit her in the end. She would have a second key to fit her door, and the next night would walk down to her in the midst of her secret doings. And when at last aunt Mac consoled herself with her pillow she dreamed of aunt Penelope dressed as an Italian peasant, and covered with jewels, riding off from Glenrig attended by a company of brigands, each of whom carried a coffer of gold before him on his saddle. And it would be using much too weak an expression to say that aunt Mac looked daggers at aunt Pen at the breakfast-table next morning. Spears and javelins convey but a faint idea of the cutting intensity of glance with which she favoured her.

That day, in passing down the hall, aunt Penelope observed a second of those pretty missives addressed to Butterfly Terrace, Brompton, lying conspicuously on the hall table. And now shudder again, virtuous reader, for this wicked aunt Pen took the note and put it in her pocket. Afterwards she read it in her own room, and it never left Glenrig. On returning to the drawing-room after this exploit she found that Mrs. Archie had had another letter from her husband, in which he stated that he found it impossible to go to Glenrig for a considerable time, and wished her to return at once to London. They could pay a good visit together during the long vacation; he must defer it till then; and Mrs. Archie, like a loyal and loving wife, was most anxious to depart without delay, although with overwhelming regret, and gratitude for her delightful, if short, sojourn in the home of her dear husband. Aunt Pen, entering the room, sat down quietly anchored in the midst of the little storm of mild dismay and persecution which had arisen after Mrs. Archie's announcement of her husband's

best, and her own resolve. Aunt MacAlister was strong in deprecation, condemning her nephew loudly; and uncle Randal and aunt Janette, though they loved not their fine daughter-in-law, tried for the sake of their worshipped son, to make believe to their own kindly hearts that they were sorry to lose her. Mary and Rachel said nothing, but then that was their usual mode of expressing their feelings.

"Well, well, Penelope," said mild little Mrs. Janette, "it's very lucky, as she is resolved to go, that we have asked our friends to come to-night. We'll give her one glens dance before she goes."

To this aunt Penelope nodded and smiled acquiescence over her knitting. And Mrs. Archie writhed uneasily on her sofa, and watched aunt Pen intently out of her pale blue-green eyes from behind her novel. And still aunt Pen sat in the window counting her stitches, with her eyes puckered up in the sun, and her cheeks broad with content and good humour. And after that Mrs. Archie did not appear much in the drawing-room that day, being occupied upstairs in packing her trunks, and preparing her dress for the evening.

For there was to be a party at Glenrig that night. Not the kind of country ball where the dancing commences at eleven, and a professional musician comes down by train from the nearest important town to play the polkas and mazurkas; but a species of old-fashioned country party, where the matrons come in their good well-kept silks and satins of decent make, and wear caps which they bring tenderly pinned up in their lace pocket-handkerchiefs; where a young lady may consider herself full-dressed in a high white muslin with a rose in her hair, and her partner for the first dance hands her the seed-cake from the round table, where tea is being made for the company; and where the old ladies regale themselves over their gossip in the corner with hot sally-lun, and send back their cups for a little more sugar.

Evening arrived, and the drawing-room was filled early with a right merry company. The girls tied their sandals and smoothed out their sashes up in aunt Janette's room, and then came down in groups to the drawing-room, and the old ladies nodded their heads together for a few minutes after they had pinned on their caps, and then followed them. And the young men placed chairs for the young ladies, and hoped they had enjoyed their drive, and had not caught cold; hoped that Miss Annie's parcel came all right by the postman, and that cousin Kate found the ribbon chosen in town the other day of the right shade. And Mary and Rachel looked very nice with their white shoulders peeping out of their lilac silks, and Letitia made tea as usual in her white muslin and favourite coral pecklace. Her face was fairer and her hair cloudier than they used to appear, and her wide-awake amber eyes seemed to have got darker settings than they had a month ago. But come one speaks, and the colour runs red over her cheek, and she laughs a gay laugh. The child who runs to put salt on a bird's tail is as wise as the person who ever expected to find Letitia sentimentalizing. And Mrs. Archie

comes in, in a cloud of blue crape spangled with silver, and with pearls twisted in her fair ringlets, and the country girls in their simple stuff gaze at her in a maze of admiration as she floats into a chair and consents to be helped to a cup of tea.

And now the fun begins and is carried on with great spirit, Letitia dancing more blithely than anybody, only detected once by aunt Pen in a tired far-away look of the eyes. But who deserved blame for that? Aunt Penelope need not be always watching somebody! And indeed aunt Pen herself did not escape without criticism that night, for aunt Mac never forgave her for the country dance in which she had the bad taste to join. A woman come to her time of life. Faugh! it was too ridiculous!

The evening sped and the supper came, carried in on trays, and handed about like the tea. And after Mrs. Archie had eaten her supper, she changed her seat, once, twice, thrice, getting nearer the door each time, on account of the heat, and at last slipped out of the room whilst aunt Pen was discussing the wing of a chicken and lending a sympathizing ear to the tale of domestic woes poured therein by a neighbour whose servant had had the unheard-of audacity to get married. "And there she walked out on Sunday morning as brazen as you please, and came home with a ring on her finger!" Aunt Pen waited till her wing, and her duties of consoler, were finished, and then, sending away her plate, shook a crumb from the brown and gold-colour brocade, and left the drawing-room.

The hall was alight, but the dining-room at its extreme end had been left in forgotten darkness. Thither aunt Pen turned her steps, taking no light. On entering softly, she perceived a square vista of brightness, whose rays streamed from the most distant wainscot. She crept very noiselessly round the dark walls to the spot, and caught a glimpse of the fair Ethelind down on her knees before something like a trunk, in what seemed a small closet or passage, running behind the wainscot. She was hurrying madly over the contents of the chest, or whatever receptacle it might be, and aunt Pen could hear her enraged panting whispers, as she tossed about the mouldy contents, evidently finding only disappointment in her search.

"Nothing, after all!" she groaned; "nothing but an old cake-basket, two salt-cellar, and a trumpery old yellow satin gown!"

Aunt Penelope, shaking with laughter, stretched out her hand, and slid the panel into its place, closing the aperture from without.

And away went this cruel aunt Pen, closing the dining-room door as she came out. "Nicely caged at last," she said; "and now, if Archie does not fail me, he'll be here in a few minutes!"

What with the dancing and talking, no one in the drawing-room heard the arrival of a conveyance at the door; and when "Mr. Archie, God bless his handsome face!" invaded the hall, with his rugs and scarfs and portmanteau, Bridget forgot all propriety, clapped her hands, and was

making off to the drawing-room with the news. But Archie said, "Don't interrupt the dancing, Bridget. I'm glad to see that nothing is wrong. I'll go up and get rid of these things, and then surprise them. Get me a light."

And so, to aunt Pen's infinite satisfaction, and the bewilderment of one else, the door opened in the middle of a dance, and lawyer Archie walked in. Rather a cheer than a murmur of welcome filled the room, and aunt Janette forgot herself so far as to fall into her son's arms in presence of her guests.

"Upon my word, this is very pleasant," said Archie, after the greetings were over and he had sat down by his father's chair and surveyed the company, rather restlessly, as if searching for some face not yet visible. "Very pleasant to see so many friends all together on one's arrival home."

"But you don't ask for your wife, nephew Archie," said aunt Pen, slyly.

"For whom?" asked Archie, turning a blank face upon her.

"Your wife."

"Oh, come, aunt Pen, you're as bad as ever I see! Well, we'll have it out by-and-by."

"I am quite in earnest, nephew Archie. I say, why don't you ask for your wife?"

"Yes, certainly, your wife," said old Randal.

"Oh, yes, Archie dear, your wife, you know!" said aunt Janette, looking nervously in her son's face. Archie's puzzled eyes scanned the groups of inquiring faces around him. He began to think he was the victim of some joke in which all present were leagued against him. Aunt Pen came to the rescue.

"Look here, now," she said; "Archie, did you write that letter?"

Letitia all this time had been standing invisible behind a curtain, drumming with her fingers on the window-shutter. She stopped drumming.

Archie took the letter which aunt Pen gave him, and looked it over. Then he laughed, once, twice, and again, and again, so gaily, with such a genuine ring, that every one joined perforce. "No, I'll swear I never did!" he said, as soon as he could find his voice.

"But is it not your writing?"

"Faith, it's uncommonly like it. At least it's very like what I might write if I were on my good behaviour."

"Well, then," said aunt Pen, who seemed to have taken upon her the duty of spokeswoman for the family, "our reasons for believing you to have a wife are, firstly, that precious epistle in your hand; secondly, the arrival of the lady; and, thirdly, your regular letters to her since she came, and here to you."

Archie extended his left hand. "Will any of you gentlemen be kind enough to give me a pinch?"

"Of snuff?" asked a stout little gentleman, producing his box. No, Archie said, laughing, but a pinch on his cheek, to assure him that he was awake. After some one had performed that kind office for him, Archie



proceeded to make a speech, which, being quite in his way, it is to be supposed he found no difficulty in doing.

"I beg to state," he said, "to this good company, that I am not married, nor did I ever make the acquaintance of any lady rejoicing in the romantic name of 'Ethelind.' I now understand why aunt Penelope wrote off to me to come home in such a hurry that I concluded you must be all dead, or the house have fallen at least; and also, I suppose, why she was so urgent to know all particulars of my habit as to the posting of my letters home; and also as much as possible about the servants at my lodging in Brompton. If it will throw any light on this affair, I will state that it has been my custom to write my letters for Glenrig during the evening at Brompton, and to leave them on the table for the servant; for whose sake I had been led to understand an obliging milkman took them away and posted them early in the morning. Of the servants I can tell very little. The maid who attended upon me until about a month ago was a rather nice-looking, fair-haired girl; but I did not like her much, as I suspected her more than once of meddling with my loose papers. She left, and another came in her place, a quiet-looking young woman, of whom I had never any reason to complain. It was rather strange, however, that when I told her, the night before last, that I should start for Ireland in the morning, and must be wakened early, she dropped my slippers in a panic and ran out of the room. And the next morning, as I was leaving, my landlady was in great trouble, as it seemed Sarah had left the house suddenly, and not returned."

"The best thing she could do, I think!" said aunt Pen. And then she, on her side, proceeded to make a speech, in which she triumphantly informed the company, with many a laughing pause, and many an energetic nod of her brilliant cap, of how she had, from the first, recognized in the would-be Mrs. Archie her former protégée, Bessie Anderson, the grandchild of old Nannie, who knew the secret hiding-place of the supposed treasure; and how, recollecting the grandmother's boast, and Bessie's cleverness and covetous disposition, she had found no difficulty in arriving at the motive of the hoax; also that on calling to mind the fact that Bessie had been sent from Glenrig in disgrace ten years ago for cleverly forging a letter, she had hardly been surprised at the successful deception she had been enabled to attempt. Then she recounted her nightly adventures with the fair "Ethelind," and lastly proceeded to read aloud two letters. This was the first:—

DEAR BESSIE,—All is well here. A. M. is going on as usual. I received your letter, and I turned it as agreed. I got a letter to post from A. M. to his mother, and burned it also, as agreed. I hope all is going well. Don't forget to send me the envelopes. Old B—— is getting cross about her money.—Your faithful friend,

SARAH GUNN.

A chorus of explanations hailed this letter. Aunt Moe was by this time growing very white and blue in the face. Archie was in agonies of

laughter; uncle Randal was listening with all his might; aunt Janette was in a hopeless maze of bewilderment; Mary and Rachel were trying to understand; Letitia was still invisible. Aunt Pen proceeded with the next letter.

DEAR SARAH,—Why did you send me a sheet of blank paper? You know I am anxious for news. *Write quickly* and tell me what is going on. The two old aunts are still here and very troublesome. I did not count on having them to deal with. One of them goes spying about the house at night, and I know she suspects me. The other one watches her as well as she watches me. I have found the place, however, and will search it whenever I can. I locked up the two old aunts the other night, and had the field to myself. One of the panels in the end wall of the dining-room slides back, as granny said. I must try and get out of this as soon as I can. I can't tell yet what I shall have with me. I enclose the envelope. Use the most *carelessly written* one first. Be sure you *watch well*, and don't forget to *burn this*.

BESSIE ANDERSON.

"I, being the suspicious old aunt," said aunt Pen, folding the paper with mock solemnity, "stole these letters, and inside the last I found these envelopes, enclosed all ready for the purpose of covering the epistles received by Miss Bessie from her disinterested friend, Miss Green. This evening I gave her a hint of my nephew's expected arrival here before to-morrow night, and I think it has hastened her movements a little. And now, I believe, we have nearly got to the bottom of it."

Here aunt Mac, having probably got a return of that toothache from which she had suffered so much ten years ago, got up and left the room. And after the shrieks of laughter, which had rung through the drawing-room, had somewhat subsided, aunt Pen went off to free the fair "Ethelind" from her captivity. But lo! the bird had flown! On discovering which fact, aunt Pen looked neither surprised nor displeased. The blue crape dress and many other articles (value for old S—'s money, possibly) were afterwards found in her room, but "Mrs. Archie" was never seen again by any of the inhabitants of Glenrig. A merry country-dance concluded the evening, Letitia and Archie leading off; and aunt Mac having departed in her "shanderadan," aunt Penelope ventured to join. We have only now to add that on the next day, Letitia, creeping into the wonderful closet to see what manner of place it might be, laughingly dragged forth the old yellow satin gown. It was very heavy and thick, and being ripped up, proved to be filled, between the lining and the satin, with a quantity of old-fashioned jewels of valuable description, and goodly guineas to a large amount.

A slab in Cushlake church covers good old uncle Randal—"Also Janette his wife." The two aunts, their "warfare o'er," sleep soundly hard by. Mary and Rachel have grown-up sons and daughters. And Letitia and Archie, when they come to Glenrig for the summer, tell their children the merry story of that clever Bessie who gave them so merry a laugh, and found for them the wonderful hidden closet.

## Primitive Language.

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THE claims of different communities to speak the primeval language—the language of Adam and Eve in Paradise—give amusing evidence of pride and ignorance. Among the nations who recognize the authority of the Bible (though the book says nothing on the subject), Hebrew is generally believed to have the highest pretensions to antiquity; but many of the Welsh and the Biscayan writers have been persistent in asserting for the Cambrian and the Euscara the honour of being the *fons et origo* of all other tongues. The latest claim has been put forward for the Hawaiian, or the language of the Sandwich Islands, as being that from which the venerable Sanscrit and all its descendants are derived \*

The Hawaiian has the attraction of presenting the very simplest elements as regards sounds; the smallest number of consonants possessed by any known tongue, namely, seven; its vowels, the ordinary five, pronounced with only the modification of a longer or shorter utterance, the vowel sounds greatly preponderating; there is no combination of consonants whatever without the intervention of a vowel, and every word has a vowel termination. That such a tongue must be spoken with great facility, is very obvious; that it can have no very considerable variety of syllables, is equally so, and that it should be characterized by frequent repetitions of the same syllables is a necessity imposed by the paucity and poverty of its elementary character. Distinctness of enunciation is not, however, the result of this simplicity; and the variety of names given by navigators to Hawaiian persons, places, and things, shows that the native words had to the ears of strangers an imperfect utterance. The Hawaiians have no *r*, yet the elongated *a* is often written *ar*; *l* and *r* are scarcely distinguishable; so the capital is sometimes written Honolulu, sometimes Honururu.

Such a language must have had its birth in a rude civilization. It sufficed for the simple wants of an aboriginal population, for the interchange of thoughts that were few, and for the naming of objects confined to the produce of the same soil and the same climate. Science there was none, and it demanded no form of expression. The administration of justice was simple, the rights of persons and property somewhat vaguely recognised or understood; so that *law* itself would but be represented by a phraseology connected less with reason or equity than with long

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\* "I believe it will be found that all those tongues which we designate as the Indo-European languages have their true root and origin in the Polynesian language. I am certain this is the case as regards the Greek and Sanscrit. I find reason to believe it to be so as to the Latin and other more modern tongues—in short, as to all European languages, old and young."—*Dr. T. Ross on the Polynesian Language*. Hahn Maui, 1862.

usage and recognized power. In the field of ethics still less would be the clear distinctions between right and wrong—between vices and virtues. And so, of course, in the higher regions of intellect. Who could give to a savage any correct notion of what we mean by *Philosophy* in the abstract, or by any of its practical branches, moral or physical? What *enriches* and enriches language is intercourse with others—commercial intercourse more than any other, and especially intercourse with superior races. To this may be traced the resemblance which exists between the *numerals* even of remote nations. These were necessary to the commonest operations of barter, and may be traced from country to country, accompanying the merchant adventurer on his way. But without intercourse there will be found to be few affinities of language; probably, none whatever where evidence exists of absolute isolation, and the ethnological type is without resemblance to any other.

Naturally enough, refined distinctions are not to be found in the scanty nomenclature of rude nations. Many ideas which are clear to the instructed, and for which they easily find expression, are confused to the mind of the savage, and confused conception necessitates imperfect expression. There are tribes that cannot count the first five numbers, who represent two by repeating one and one, and who have a single word for many or multitude—such as stars, sands, or leaves. In the Hawaiian language there are only six words for colours: there is no distinction between black, blue, and deep green; between bright yellow and white; between red and brown. Words for white and black, dark and light, the green of earth and the blue of heaven, will everywhere be found. To express what is round and what is square, words are not wanting; but for the many less marked varieties of shape, words would be sought in vain.

When, for physical and tangible objects, the vocabulary is scant, it will be still more wanting in words which convey the mental emotions. In the Hawaiian language, all the friendly affections—love, sympathy, gratitude, esteem, kindness, benevolence, tenderness—have a single representative in the word *Aloha*; a word so resembling the hailing of our mariners (holla, halo!) that we find it stated in the Hawaiian annals that the sailors who accompanied Captain Cook often uttered “*Aloha, aloha!*” to which a friendly interpretation was immediately given by the natives. The more vehement passions, such as hate and anger, have a greater variety of expression. *Huhu*, the word for rage, literally means *swell, swell*; as we say swelling, bursting with passion.

Resemblances between vowel utterances, in different languages, for the same object, do little to prove their origin from the same source. For an object so universal as *water*, the sounds *a*, *o*, *e*, *i*, and *u*, will be found employed in different parts of the world. The simplest sounds will generally be used to represent the most common objects. A novelty introduced will in most cases necessitate a combination, unless the object indicated bring with it its foreign name.

To the influence of *Asia*, modifications of the normal tongue of the

ancient world are principally to be traced. And this is quite natural, considering the advanced civilization of many of the Oriental races, their migratory habits, the comparative profuseness of their idioms, so fitted to enrich the dialects of less advanced peoples. And it may be observed that, of the most extended of the Asiatic tongues—that of the Chinese, who were not a wandering people—scarcely a word is to be found in the vocabularies of the West. The monosyllabic roots of the Sanscrit may be traced in the great divisions of Celtic, Gothic, and Slavonic languages; but of the *Huan-hwa*, the classic speech of China, it is believed that scarcely a single word has made its way to the vocabularies of civilization; except, as in the case of *Tea*, *Cha*, *Tchai*, where the article represented is exclusively of Chinese growth.

If in Asia the sources are to be sought of the ramifications of many languages, we may also regard it as the field where languages were fused of a higher antiquity than are preserved in any existing records. The history of language is involved in darkness, like the history of man; but language must in all times have represented the civilization with which it was associated—decaying with decaying peoples, progressing and improving wherever the human race progressed or improved.

The farther we remove from Central Asia, the fewer will be the affinities found with Asian tongues—an evident proof that the language of those remote regions *had not* a common origin; for, if they had such an origin, they would be less changed than those from whence, by the advocates of a single primitive tongue, they are supposed to be derived. The idiom most nearly resembling the ancient Latin is not that now spoken in Italy or Spain, for Italian and Spanish have been created out of the influence of many invasions, which have modified the language of Virgil and Tacitus; while in the distant *Dacia*, the Wallachian, as spoken at the present hour, bears a near resemblance to the idiom used in the days of Imperial Rome. A Roman of the first century would be better understood in Bucharest than in Bologna. An ancient Scandinavian would more easily hold intercourse with a modern Icelandic from Reykjavik than with a Dane or Swede from Copenhagen or Stockholm; but neither Goth, Scandinavian, nor Saxon, would be intelligible to those who speak our modern English tongue.

In languages, as in races, the law of progress prevails. What is imperfect perishes. The strong, the intellectual, supersedes the barbarous and the weak. No dialect of antiquity can compare in strength and variety with those which represent modern civilization. The English probably contains twenty thousand words for which no synonyms could be found in the classical tongues; and it may be doubted whether an inhabitant of ancient Athens or Rome would understand many of the adaptations from Greek and Latin, of which modern science has availed itself.

All rude languages have vowel terminations alone; and it may be asked whether, in any language, any word can be pronounced, however it

may be written, without a vowel termination; for a vowel is but an out-breaking and releasing of the breath; and the more mechanical opening of the mouth after the formation of a consonant necessarily gives a more or less distinguishable vowel sound. In the Italian, as written, almost every word ends with a vowel; the few exceptions, as *il*, *al*, *ed*, are really pronounced *il-e*, *al-e*, *ed-e*. In the primary schools of Holland the alphabet is invariably taught by post-fixing instead of prefixing the vowel to the consonant sound. Instead of *ef* for *f*, they use *fe*; not *el* (*l*), but *le*; not *em* (*m*), but *me*; not *en* (*n*), but *ne*; *re*, not *er* (*r*); *se*, not *es* (*s*); *ze* (*x*), not *ex*; and by this means reading is wonderfully facilitated. What can be more perplexing than the teaching an English child to spell *cat*, calling the first letter *see*, and making *see-a-t*, instead of *ke-a-t*, out of the three letters. To a Dutch child the teacher would say *ke-a-t*, and the word is but a rapid sequence of the sounds represented by the letters.

The difficulty of ending every word with a consonant will be discovered if an attempt be made to pronounce the first two letters of the alphabet, *ab*. This cannot be done without a strong effort to dwell upon the *b*, so as to prevent the sudden exhalation of the breath, which is in itself a vowel sound. The utterance of the vowel can only be prevented by the inhalation and absorption of the breath in the throat. A child can, with difficulty, be taught to say *ab*. It will relieve itself by opening its mouth, which will give *aba*, *abe*, *abi*, *abo*, *abu*, as may be; or a vowel sound so vague as scarcely to be distinguishable, but still a vowel sound.

The number of distinct vowel sounds is only three—*a*, produced by the widest opening of the mouth; *u*, the narrowest; and *i*, the middle. *E* is but a combination of *a* and *i*, *o* of *a* and *u*; they are, in fact, diphthongal vowels. Wherever *ai* or *au* occur in English words, they are pronounced like the long *e* and *o* of the Italian and most other continental languages. There can be no doubt that the *kui* of the Greeks, the *que* of the Latins, and the *che* of the Tuscan represent the same sound. The ancient pronunciation of Cæsar (*kaiser*) is preserved by the Germans. The soft *c* of the Italians, and, indeed, of many modern tongues, is but a false orthography.

In a language where vowels prevail, as they prevail in the Hawaiian, the consonants, though few in number, have often an indistinctness in pronunciation not known to languages of more complicated construction. This indistinctness creates difficulties in tracing analogies in words that may have emanated from the same source. But in languages possessing only a few syllabic forms analogies and resemblances must be many from the necessities of the case, the whole vocabulary being so small; so that the same word will have many meanings.\* In monosyllabic tongues, this is a defect obviously more remarkable than in polysyllabic ones. The

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\* *Umi*, in Hawaiian, means rat-trap, the numeral ten, infanticide, and, when repeated (*umi umi*), a man's beard. I have seen an attempt made to show some affinity between these four objects. In China, the word *I* has at least sixty significations; the word *chin*, about half as many.

Chinese diminish, but cannot remove the difficulty, by different intonations, by shortening or lengthening the sound, or by a raising or falling of the voice, or by combinations of different sounds having the same, or nearly the same, meaning; for example, *kan* and *kien* have many meanings, but both represent *see* or *sight*, and when the two are combined, the meaning is unmistakable; if one were used alone misconception would be frequent. When, however, two Chinamen do not understand one another orally, recourse is had to the *sign*, which represents the idea, and which is made on the hand or in the air (for they have no alphabet); and this sign is universally intelligible.

Vowels represent simple exhalations of the breath. The lips, the teeth, the palate, and the throat are called into use when a consonant has to be pronounced. The combination of consonants in a sequence presents the greatest difficulty to the speaker. Many rude nations are unable to unite consonants without the intervention of a connecting vowel. The Slavonic letter *m* (*schtsch*), the English *th*, the Welsh *ll*, and many others, are not pronounceable by the larger portion of the human race. *Yankes* (N. A. Indian) was through *Yenke*, *Yngkele*, *Ingelis*, derived from *English*; *pigeon* (Chinese), *pigna*, *pignis*, *bisnia*, from *business*.

There is some ground for the theory that the fewer the consonants in language the greater must be its antiquity. And it is to be observed that consonants are fewest in the idioms of tropical nations. There are, however, exceptions to this. The Finnish language is remarkable for the small number of consonants in the aboriginal Finnish words; but the inflections of its nouns and verbs are greater than in most languages, and can only have been the result of its use for many ages.

The first attempts at utterance, or, rather, the earliest sounds of the infant, will be found associated with the parental and filial relations. *Ba*, *pa*, *ma*, occur in most languages as one of, or part of, the forms by which the child appeals to the maternal or paternal care.

Imitative sounds, again, run through most languages, whether rude or polished. Birds take the name of their notes, as *cuckoo*, *peewit*. Many insects and beasts may be known by the resemblance between their names and their voices. Hissing, grunting, humming, thundering, and a hundred others, represent noises to which the words assimilate: the ear has taught the tongue to give them expression.

Rude languages exhibit, far more than cultivated ones, the analogy between the sound and the object it designates. A recess, a den, a chasm, would naturally be represented by opening the mouth, and pronouncing the vowel *a*, which requires the widest separation of the lips. Something to assimilate the sign with the thing signified will be found in all the simpler forms of speech. But the longer languages exist, and the more their vocabularies are enriched, the less intimately will the sound be associated with the sense of a word: in process of time, the art of writing settles an orthography without reference to the origin of words. In the early stage of writing, spelling is necessarily capricious: intercourse

and education are necessary to the adoption of any general system, and orthography must adapt itself to the alphabet which is adopted.

What we call *grammar* could not have been born with language, unless language had been divinely communicated. In its beginnings, language only represented objects visible or tangible to the external senses. Inward emotions displayed themselves in the changes of countenance (such as animals exhibit, but which appear in man with vastly superior power of expression), or in the utterance of ejaculatory sounds. All languages retain these, with much similarity and even identity of character; but the words which represent the more refined sensibilities are of later development.

In the elementary forms of language there is no distinction between nouns and verbs—there are no declensions or conjugations. Pronouns are nouns; adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions are non-existent. Substantives and adjectives come under the same category. Where ideas are represented by signs (as in Chinese), the inflections of nouns and verbs are not seen in the modifications of the root, but in the addition of some other sign. A change of position may show the distinction between active and passive, the signs being the same. Man, love, will mean that a man loves; love, man, that a man is loved. In the languages that represent the highest civilization, the modes of inflection differ greatly. The tenses of our English verbs are mostly represented by auxiliary verbs; the cases of our nouns by particles. We are satisfied with one subjunctive mood; the Spaniards have three. The Germans will have three genders for their definite articles; we will have only one; many languages do without any. Could we trace languages to their earliest stages, we should find only the primary words which represent some definite thought, or thing, or act, whether to that thought, thing, or act we give the name of noun or verb; but the relations of the primary word to time, to place, to other objects, would, in process of time, be found in modifications of the primitive root, or in additions to it, which would represent those other relations.

The disappearance of the ruder idioms from the face of the earth, the invasions of the more perfect forms of speech into the territories of the less perfect, the numerous additions made to the vocabularies of civilized nations, the influence of commerce, of philosophical investigation and discoveries, of travel, of the study of other tongues, upon spoken and written language, are questions every one of which affords materials for volumes of inquiry. What have been the results of warlike invasions?—what of peaceful intercourse? What may have been done by legislation—what by religious action—to maintain, to mould, to modify the instruments of outward communication by the tongue, the pen, the press, are subjects of no common interest. The migration of words affords as various and as wide a field for study as that of seeds, or fishes, or birds, or beasts, or men; and many of the phenomena would not easily be solved.



## Of Geese.

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In most large households there is some unfortunate wight to be found who enjoys the unhappy and unenviable distinction of being "the fool of the family." To what circumstance he originally owed this disagreeable *sobriquet* is not always certain; but if it happened to attach to him in very early life, he has but a sorry chance of ridding himself of it, act he afterwards never so wisely. Do what he may, say what he will, he has acquired the reputation of the fool, and this will cloud in most people's eyes any small merit he may possibly exhibit at a later period. There are certain animals too, in the lower orders of creation, who, by the general, nay the almost universal, assent of mankind, have obtained, and often very undeservedly, the character of being, beyond their fellows, silly and foolish, or having, as Pinkerton expresses it in one of his amusing letters, "a fine genius for stupidity."

Amongst these luckless creatures none stands second to the goose. But a little consideration will satisfy us that this despised and decried bird, whose many excellent qualities are—as has been the case with many a great man—never discovered till after his death, has been harshly judged of by the world, who—with the same injustice which condemned Socrates, and stigmatised the shapely Richard III. as a humpback, denounced Macchiavelli as the advocate of political immorality, and Robespierre as being no less fond of blood than were the horses of Diomed—ascribes to the goose an immeasurable stupidity, together with a vanity of not more moderate dimensions. Now it is not a little remarkable that Pliny observes that *modesty* is the attribute which, in the view of many persons, is most conspicuous in this maligned biped, and, from his mode of expressing himself, one might almost infer the old naturalist shared in this belief. When the Hindoo writers desire to intimate that a woman's movements are graceful, they say she walks like a goose—a parallel that scarcely would be instituted if in step or gesture the goose betrayed any of the vanity he has been so wantonly accused of. Indeed, when Frederick Nausea, Bishop of Vienne, desired, in his panegyric on St. Quaintin, to convey a fitting idea of the sobriety, chastity, and vigilance of that eminent personage, he found he could not express himself more forcibly than by asserting the holy and virtuous man closely resembled a goose. Had folly been esteemed a prominent characteristic of the bird, the saint would hardly have been likened to it; but it is only ignorance of the darkest hue that ventures to portray the goose as deficient in sagacity or intelligence.

There again is Pliny to be cited, who remarks of geese, that "one might almost be tempted to think that these creatures have an apprecia-

tion of wisdom, for it is said that one of them was the constant companion of the peripatetic philosopher Lacydes, and would never leave him, either in public or when at the bath, by night or by day." We learn from another source, that when this wisdom-loving goose unfortunately died, his friend and companion, the philosopher, honoured him with that last token of affection and respect, a costly and splendid funeral. *Ælian* speaks of a particular species of the anserine tribe, which he calls *chenalopez* or fox-goose, and which, according to his account, derived this appellation from its crafty and mischievous qualities. He adds, however, that the bird was an object of worship to the Egyptians, so the probability is, that the imputed craft was nothing else than an unusual amount of sagacity, and the propensity to mischief was only an ill name awarded to superior activity and more than ordinary vivacity; for it is inconceivable that the wisest people of antiquity should reverence an animal in which low cunning and an aptitude for malice were predominating characteristics.

It is perfectly well known that if the ancient Egyptians worshipped the goose, they ate him as well—goose-flesh and beef constituting the principal portion of their animal food; and perhaps we should not greatly mistake the matter were we to suppose that, as from the one they hoped to derive physical strength, so from the other they expected to borrow intellectual vigour. It has been an opinion long current amongst mankind that as the bodily, so the mental, faculties depend for their condition merely on the nature of the aliment consumed; that some species of food have a direct influence in modifying the action of the brain, either stimulating its activity, or dulling its powers; and that, in the case of animal diet, the nature of the animal consumed will, in a greater or less degree, become the nature of the animal consuming. Thus, amongst some nations, the hare and the deer are eschewed as articles of sustenance, lest, in eating, the fearfulness and timidity of these quickly terrified creatures should be acquired; whilst other nations have devoured wolves' flesh, and drunk lions' blood, in the hope of thereby becoming fierce and courageous. From such opinions the Egyptians were notoriously not exempt; and, therefore, it is not unreasonable to suppose, in their belief, the mental capacity of the goose was of a high order, inasmuch as they were so greatly devoted to its use for the purposes of food.

But it is unnecessary to recur to so remote a period as that in which "the wisdom of the Egyptians" flourished to establish our position. There, close at hand, is a shrewd enough fellow ready to bear testimony on the goose's behalf. What says Taylor, the water poet? With him the goose is always feminine, for he writes—

*Her brains with salt and pepper if you blend  
And eat, they will the understanding mend.*

And again—

*Her lungs and liver into powder dried,  
And, fasting, in an ass's milk applied,  
Is an experienced cordial for the spleen.*

The conviction prevailed in Taylor's age that men who fed on doves were ever placable, and never choleric; that, as we have just said, they imbibed, from the act of deglutition, the amiable and peace-loving disposition of the birds which the gastric apparatus was disposing of. If, then, a goose's brain, when eaten, mended the understanding, and its liver and lungs rectified the disorders of the spleen, the conclusion is irresistible that, so far from being a silly and vain specimen of creation, as has been hastily and ignorantly alleged, the goose is beyond compare to be esteemed for its intellectual superiority and gentleness of disposition. Benedetto Veltori, a celebrated practitioner in his day, used to prescribe, in cases of convulsions, *goose's grease*, roasted cat, and spice—the *rationale* of his practice evidently being to tranquillize the nerves by imparting to the patient the placidity of temperament and general composure which distinguishes alike the goose and the "harmless necessary cat." The therapeutical value of the goose has also been acknowledged in our own country, for we find that, in the island of Purbeck, geese were, and perhaps still are, habitually kept in the cow-houses, through a notion which is easier ridiculed than dispelled—that they contribute to the health of the cattle. In Batchelor's *Bedfordshire*, moreover, we read that, by many farmers in that county, geese are kept entirely from the belief that their presence in the pastures where the cattle feed is decidedly beneficial to the beasts in a sanitary point of view. It is supposed the birds in some way mitigate the hardness of the water, which is found extremely prejudicial to the cows. When several of Sir Edward Lyttleton's hounds were bitten by a mad dog, the owner was recommended to turn a flock of geese into the kennel, and the best results ensued; for the hounds, lapping up the goose-dung, were either cured of the hydrophobia, or protected against its attacks as by a powerful and efficient prophylactic. Possessing curative virtues of this description, we are scarcely entitled to wonder when we find Dr. Donne observing that "the voice and sound of the goose and snake is all one," for was not the snake dedicated to *Æsculapius*, and supposed to image the profoundest wisdom? And if it has been shown a goose can cure the hydrophobia, it has been shown he can do a great deal more than our faculties of medicine have ever yet achieved with all their efforts. In the *Philosophical Transactions* it is asserted that, of all animals the goose is the most prescient of earthquakes—all animals, of course include astronomers royal and their assistants, so let Mr. Airey and Mr. Glaisher look to it; what prescience have they of earthquakes?

The carefulness of this bird has been warmly eulogized by Scaliger, who declares it the very emblem of prudence; for not only does it, when it finds itself indisposed, take at once to doctoring itself, but in passing under an arch, however lofty, it observes a proper precaution against the possibility of accident by stooping its head. An ill-tempered writer, whose last Michaelmas dinner had probably disagreed with him, in a tract to which he gave the affected title of "A Strange Metamorphosis of Man transformed into a Wildernesse, deciphered in Characters," gives

another account of the matter. He says (with him, too, the goose, perhaps on account of its loquacity, is feminine), "She hath a great opinion of her own stature, especially if she be in company of the rest of her neighbours and fellow gossipers, the duckes and hennes, at a harvest feast; for then, if she enter into the Hall there, as high and wide as *Doore* is, she will stoope for feare of breaking her head." This Zoffius of a critic objects also to the concert with which these birds occasionally regale those who have the advantage of living in their vicinity. He declares that they "hate the lawrell, which is the reason they have no poet amongst them; so as if there be any that seem to have a snatch [*sic*] in that generous science, he arrives no higher than the style of a ballet, wherein they have reasonable faculties, especially at a Wake, when they assemble themselves together at a towne-greene, for then they sing their Ballets, and lay out such throats as the country fiddlers cannot be heard."

It is in a more generous spirit that Michael Savonarola testifies to their sagacity in every morning drinking before they touch their food, and thus ensuring, should not the cook interpose, for themselves a long life, as it is an ascertained fact, or supposed to be such, that birds which habitually drink before eating are invariably long-lived. In crowing Mount Taurus, which it does in flocks, it has been observed to take a stone in its beak, in order to maintain a total silence; for its cackling—a weakness to which it is unhappily addicted—would otherwise betray its presence to the eagles which abound in that region, and with whom the goose is a dainty as much appreciated as it is by the Soot at Christmas-tide. Although in some senses a solemn bird, which in England invariably at one time figured at funeral feasts, it has shown itself not insensible to the calls of domestic duty, for a goose has been seen in a kitchen industriously turning a spit on which a turkey has been roasting.

Writers on psychology lead us to believe that animals greatly given to sleep are usually inferior in sagacity to those whose somnolency is of a less marked character, and, in our own species, it is noticeable that, as the brain expands and the mental powers develop themselves, the amount of sleep indulged in sensibly diminishes. Amongst the lower animals the monkey has been considered the most closely to approximate to man in his organisation, and, as man is the least sleepy of all animals, so in a minor degree is the monkey less prone to slumber than most other animals. Now the wakefulness of the goose is proverbial, and supplies an additional reason for our protest against the calumnies to which the highly gifted and singularly endowed subject of these remarks has been ruthlessly exposed. It was the vigilance of her geese which saved Rome; the cackling bird was awake when the *civis Romanus* was wrapped in sweet oblivion, and that wakefulness long rendered the feathered sentry sacred in the eyes of the people. But gratitude wears out after a time, and at a subsequent period he was esteemed more for his edible excellencies

than for his fortunate watchfulness. The geese which the Gauls reared in Picardy were driven to Rome on foot, and met a ready sale. A Consul Scipio Metellus—though another disputes with him the merit—is thought to have paid considerable attention to the fattening of the animal, whose liver, stuffed with figs, as Horace informs us, was accounted a *bonne bouche* by the masters of the world. But earlier than this the dietetical worthiness of the goose was practically recognized. An ancient Greek writer, some passage from whose works have been preserved by Athenæus, couples the “geese-feeders” with the “cowherds,” as if the occupation of both was of equal importance; whilst Homer himself alludes to “the fine home-fattened goose”—fattened, it would appear, wholly upon wheat. The Church seems early to have taken this interesting bird under her motherly protection, although we do not exactly understand why at Rome, as Jeremy Taylor says, “the common people” should be “taught to pray to St. Gall for the health and fecundity of their geese,” inasmuch as St. Ferreol is asserted by the canon Habelais—no mean authority, we should think, on such a subject—to be the patron saint of all geese, and to have merited such a distinction by his devoted admiration of roast goose. This inimitable and most savoury dish was common on the table in France on St. Martin’s day—that is, when in France St. Martin’s day and other saints’ days were held in regard—and, as it is pretended, as a slight upon the bird. It is said that the geese literally plagued the saint out of his life; that once, when preaching, a goose commenced an independent discourse in his own style, and on his own account, which vexed the saint to a degree to which no saint ought to be vexed; that accordingly he retired to a deep cave, in whose recesses he buried himself to meditate at his ease, but that there he found a goose had been before him, whose sonorous cackling completely upset his saintly composure, and drove him forth out of his retirement. To sum all, he, out of a sort of revenge, made such a hearty dinner off a goose, that, the bird proving not to be in prime condition, he fell ill, and very speedily died. In token of their high displeasure at the malevolence of geese, the people of France were said every year, on St. Martin’s day, to make their repast off roast goose—as if it were necessary to forge so incredible a legend to account for so rational and laudable an act!

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